The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOLUME XXXIX NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 18, 1924 NUMBER 498

Contents

The Week 82

Editorials

Victory by Default 85
The Future of the Estate Tax 87
The La Follette Platform 88

Contemporary Portraits: Coolidge ..... Ivan Opffer 91

General Articles

Hail to the Accidental Chief! ..... Bruce Bliven 92
New Japan and Old China ..... Nathaniel Peffer 94
Behind Coolidge: Butler ..... C. E. Ayres 96
Ranch of the Fan (Verse) ..... Grace Hazard Conkling 98
Who Wants Child Labor? ..... Viola Paradise 99
Slow Death (Verse) ..... Hazel Hall 100

Correspondence 101

American Comedy ..... Edmund Wilson 103

Reviews of Books

The Autumn of Romance ..... Robert Morss Lovett 104
Index Numbers ..... Carl Snyder 105
The Fabulous Forties ..... Percy H. Boynton 106
Briefs on Books 107

The Week

GENERALLY speaking, the record of the late Congress was about as good as was to be expected in a Presidential year, if the party in power does not have a clear majority in both houses. Under those circumstances it is customary to do as little as possible. This year, however, the closing hours were even worse than we had a right to expect. Senators Spencer, Heflin and Pittman were guilty of last-minute filibusters which helped to prevent the passage of urgently needed legislation. Even the deficiency appropriation bill was left over. President Coolidge had vetoed the $68,000,000 bill to increase salaries in the Postal Service, and sufficient votes to pass it over his veto were available, but it was not even brought up. As our readers are aware, the increase in pay for the postal men was urgently needed and richly deserved; and that its repassage should thus have gone by default is keenly regrettable. All measures for farm relief died; so did all proposals for modification of the Esch-Cummins law. No action was taken on Muscle Shoals, reclamation relief, or the reorganization of the federal departments. The project for our entering the Permanent Court of International Justice of course went by the board. So did the bill for increasing the Navy, the $165,000,000 good roads measure, and the $30,000,000 river and harbor bill.

SENATOR SPENCER of Missouri in the closing hours of the session managed the unusual feat of doing two things which in our opinion are among the worst performances by any senator during the whole session. His last-day filibustering speech was a vicious, partisan attack upon the majority report of the Walsh Committee. Senator Spencer and the other Republican members of that committee now suddenly pretend that the majority report contains a great deal of matter with which they are not familiar, and announce that they will presently make a complete minority report substantiating in detail their charges of error. If it were true that they do not know what has been going on in the oil hearings they would seem derelict in their duty as members of it; but everyone in Washington knows that the assertion is as false as the specific allegations of error are trivial. Senator Spencer in particular has occupied himself ever since he joined the committee in the endeavor to hamstring its operations, acting in the general capacity of counsel for the defense. The preliminary minority report is designed for only one purpose: to be used as a Republican campaign document and discredit with the electorate the damning revelations about the oil scandal which appear in the majority report. We are sorry to add that in this effort Senator Spencer appears likely to have the assistance of a large part of the conservative daily press of the country.

SENATOR SPENCER'S other last-minute action was equally deplorable. On behalf of the sub-committee of the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections he issued a hasty preliminary report on the election of Earle B. Mayfield of Texas. It is charged that Mayfield, who was the Ku Klux Klan candidate, was elected by the gravest frauds. The Spencer report, issued, it is charged, before the sub-committee had even heard all the evidence, completely "exonerates" Mayfield on the first point, which had to do with campaign expenditures. Even if

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

this decision had been fairly arrived at there was, of course, no reason to issue special documents piecemeal commenting one by one on the various charges against Mayfield. Here again there is a blatant attempt to play partisan politics. The Spencer report will be interpreted all over the country during the campaign as a vindication of Mayfield and the Ku Klux Klan.

BY its sins of omission, Congress has undoubtedly lessened the likelihood of a Republican victory. The anger of the Middle-Western farmers at the failure to enact any sort of legislation for their relief is certain to find expression at the polls next November, probably in the form of votes for La Follette if the opportunity is afforded. Congress's failure to come to any decision on the Muscle Shoals project, the ignoring of the Norris-Keller bill providing for a government-owned "super-power" system, the omission to get lower freight rates, the death of the good roads bill, are additional items in the indictment. Moreover, none of the chief actions taken at the last session is one in which the farmers are particularly interested. The income tax is among the least of their worries, and they see immigration restriction chiefly as tending to maintain industrial wages and thereby increase the cost of living for them. The failure to adopt the Constitutional Amendment abolishing tax-exempt securities is another grievance. Even President Coolidge has no more reason to look with disfavor on the actions of the session just closed than have the agricultural districts.

ONE of the few good deeds of Congress in its closing hours was to pass a resolution appointing a committee, headed by Senator Borah, to investigate campaign contributions this year. Senator Borah's own resolution, which failed to carry, provided compulsory reports by all parties on campaign contributions, to be made public every ten days. Since the new committee may hold hearings whenever it pleases, and can summon witnesses, it should be practically as effective. Senator La Follette wisely insisted that not only expenditures on behalf of a candidate, but those in opposition to him, should come within the province of the committee inquiry. The existence of the new investigating body should have a most salutary effect.

PRESIDENT MILLERAND does not fall back with good grace on the constitutional right of the President of the French Republic to hold office undisturbed through the seven years for which he is elected. Under the system of parliamentary responsibility the head of state can logically claim immunity from partisan attack only on the condition that he be content to remain a figurehead. Millerand has not played the rôle of figurehead. He has sought in every possible way to aggrandize the President's office. And no one doubts that the Poincaré régime took much of its color from Millerand. In the circumstances there are only two possible courses for the victorious Left to follow. They must either force Millerand out, or compel him to disavow his policy of aggrandizing the Presidency. Of these courses the former is much the safer and will probably be followed through, perhaps before this issue is in the hands of our readers. Some time will be wasted on the futility of conservative ministries that cannot secure the confidence of the Chamber. But the country will not long be content without a government that will work.

THE vote in the German Reichstag sustaining the government in its policy toward the Dawes plan justifies the hope that a settlement may be reached before many months have passed. Herriot and MacDonald are already in agreement on the evacuation of the Ruhr when Germany has taken the steps necessary to put the Dawes plan into effect. Apparently then the only serious obstacle to be overcome is the requirement under the German constitution of a two-thirds majority before the national railways can be alienated. At present the German government could not muster any such majority. But if it is true that German trade and industry are approaching a grave crisis, from which they can be saved only by foreign support of the credit structure, a great many conservatives who now vote against the government may be expected to fall into line. The terms of the Dawes settlement may be harsh, but no German who faces the facts can expect milder terms if the Dawes plan fails.

AT the time when he was forced out of office, Harry M. Daugherty was loud in assertions that "when the proper moment came" he would prove his innocence and confound his accusers. Now he seems to have changed his mind. Upon being invited to appear before the Senate Committee which has been investigating him he has suddenly lost interest in the famous defense. Relying on the decision of United States District Judge Cockran, of Ohio, who held in the case of his brother, Mal Daugherty, that the Brookhart-Wheeler Committee is without authority under the Constitution and that all its acts are void, he declines to appear. The Senate by a vote of seventy to two has passed a resolution authorizing the Committee to employ counsel and appeal from the Cockran decision to the United States Supreme Court, the resolution declaring that "the opinion and the judgment are erroneous." We believe the Senate has acted wisely and we hope for the sake of public policy that the Cockran decision will not be sustained. In recent months the Senate investigations have been of inestimable value to the cause of honest government in this country. The Cockran decision is a heavy blow at the authority of such investigations.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THIS is not the place to review in detail the evidence against Mr. Daugherty which the Committee has collected; but it is proper to observe that that evidence is of a most serious character. It was pointed out in the Senate debate that Jesse Smith, during the period when he was Daugherty's most intimate friend, roommate and "second in command" in the Department of Justice, collected more than $500,000 from bootleggers and others who believed that with these bribes they were purchasing immunity. It has been shown that in some cases these individuals did actually go unmolested by the law for long periods of time. It has been shown that Mr. Daugherty who entered office a poor man was able to accumulate, supposedly out of his $12,000 salary, deposits of $75,000 in the Midland National Bank alone, as well as a purchase 2,500 shares of Wright-Martin Aircraft stock. We submit that these charges are of a character serious enough so that any honest man against whom they were made ought to be willing and anxious to take the stand in his own behalf and explain them.

IN the May issue of the Illinois Law Review John H. Wigmore calls the attention of the legal profession to the "evasion by the Federal Senate of the Constitution's prescriptions as to the impeachments of public officers. That evasion has been taking place, for two months past, in the Senate Committee's so-called 'investigation' of the Federal Attorney-General's conduct. No influences but professional and public opinion can check this usurpation of power. The evil of it lies in its deliberate undermining of the Constitution's methods." This is an almost incredible outburst on the part of the distinguished Dean of the Law School of Northwestern University. Daugherty himself does not dare take the witness stand. Even the most reactionary newspapers are not continuously comfortable about the atmosphere of reeking corruption which enveloped Daugherty's administration. But Mr. Wigmore is aroused solely by the iniquity of the Senate in investigating Daugherty's conduct of the Department of Justice. Incredible as it may appear, he who in the past has been one of the few great names in American law reform, now has not a word of disquietude to express over the moral degradation of a Daugherty as Minister of Justice. Yet he is wrought to white heat by what he regards as the unconstitutionality of the Senate in investigating the Department of Justice. He illustrates anew that when a scholar surrenders himself to prejudice and passion, he behaves like any other man in the grip of prejudice and passion.

DEAN WIGMORE'S claim is as absurd as a matter of law as it is disheartening on the plane of morals. Of course, the Senate has the power to impeach for crimes and misdemeanors but also of course the Senate has power to investigate the administration of the executive departments of the government. Its investigating function is confirmed by constitutional practice since the foundation of the government. The Wigmore who is horrified at the misconduct of the Senate and is shamefully silent about the betrayal of law and decency by Daugherty is manifestly the post-war, and not the pre-war Wigmore. It is the same Wigmore who continues to lead the charge against phantom Red armies, and, as he demonstrated the other day in connection with the Allinson incident, is not able to distinguish between facts and fancy. The pre-war author of Wigmore's great book on Evidence was a different man. Judged by past performances we may expect a favorable response to Mr. Wigmore's appeal from "the leaders of the bar." But we shall watch with interest the response which the law teachers of the country—the moulders of the legal traditions of the next generation—will make to it.

THOSE who are responsible for the exclusion of Japanese immigration under the new law will no doubt view complacently the recent manifestations of anti-American feeling in Japan. The Japanese would like to punish us, but what can they do? Expel Americans from Japan? The only Americans there are tourists and business men, and Japan cannot afford to drive them out. Boycott American goods? The American market is much more important to Japan than the Japanese market to America. Refuse to coöperate in the economic development of the Asiatic mainland? Here again Japan has more to gain from coöperation than we have. Enter upon a naval armament race? Japan would be the first to cry enough. At the present juncture Japanese action is limited to gnashing of teeth. And since our exclusionist statesmen refuse to look into the future, they feel that there is no reason whatever for concern.

AS the World War proved, no conflict between two of the great powers can fail to drag in the rest, and many of the lesser powers besides. We have reached a stage in world affairs in which the nations naturally range themselves in parties, and in the long run, the tendency is toward a balance. In the late war Japan found herself on the side of the Allies, thanks to the Anglo-Japanese alliance. She fulfilled the terms of the alliance loyally, in spite of the fact that a powerful faction in her army believed that the interests of Japan lay on the side of the Central Powers. The number of Japanese who regard this as a grave mistake in policy has recently greatly increased. With the English-speaking peoples dominant in the Pacific Japan sees no prospect of equal treatment for a non-white power. Japan is not strong enough unaided to challenge English-speaking supremacy. But if it ever comes to a show-down between the Continental European powers and America and the British Empire, Japan will know on what side to range herself. America may

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

find that it was an extremely expensive piece of foolishness to make a permanent enemy out of Japan over the question of a mere handful of immigrants.

WALLACE W. ATWOOD, President of Clark University, has recently been the centre of what must have been an extraordinarily humiliating incident. As our readers may remember, President Atwood made himself famous two years ago by turning out the lights in the middle of a lecture by Scott Nearing before a body of students, this action being taken because he disapproved of what Nearing had to say. A group of Clark alumni in the eastern states have now adopted a resolution asking President Atwood's removal. They state that under him Clark has "lost some of her best instructors," that "her academic reputation has steadily declined," and that the present administration "appears totally indifferent to her history and traditions." Among the signers of this resolution are Dr. William Wheeler, Dean of Bussey Institute at Harvard University, Dr. W. T. M. Forbes, of Cornell, and members of the faculty at Brown, Syracuse, Maine, Barnard, Wellesley, South Carolina and elsewhere. Similar resolutions have been passed by alumni clubs at Washington and on the Pacific Coast. Even the graduating class a year ago took the same step. Such a situation must be nearly without precedent in American academic history.

THE National Association of Manufacturers is one reactionary body which has no hesitation in letting people know where it stands. It has a platform, which it is urging on both conventions. This includes a flat declaration in favor of the open shop. The N. A. M. also wants the Fordney-McCumber tariff maintained, and the Esch-Cummins law preserved inviolate. The government-owned merchant marine should be abolished, it thinks, by selling the ships to private operators. It particularly abhors the suggestion that the United States Supreme Court should not make decisions unless at least six of its members are in agreement. We strongly doubt that these views fairly represent even the members of the N. A. M. That they do not accurately interpret the attitude of business as a whole may be discovered by comparing them with the opinions expressed by such a body as the Chamber of Commerce of the United States at its recent convention. In any case, we suggest to our readers that a fairly good program for any honest liberal could be written by taking the platform of the N. A. M. and simply turning it inside out.

ONE of the sorriest aspects of the appalling Leopold-Loeb murder case in Chicago is the way in which the incident has been seized to point a number of quite unjustified morals. It is argued that too much education was responsible for the atrocious act of these two young men, though obviously much of the interest in the affair derives from the very fact that despite our enormous annual crop of murders this is one of the few times that guilty individuals have been found among college graduates. We are told with equal solemnity that the young men in question are "atheists," and that this explains everything. Those who advance this explanation conveniently forget the even more horrible murder committed by an extremely pious youth in Florida five months ago. No less absurd is the suggestion as to Leopold and Loeb that their parents' wealth is responsible, when we remember that the overwhelming majority of all murders are committed by persons of extreme poverty. It should be plain by now that neither race, education nor environment constitutes an adequate explanation of the Chicago crime. Probably the truth lies in the fact that one or both of these young men is psychologically so abnormal as to be actually, if not legally, insane. But it is too much to expect that the professional moralizers should be content with the mere scientific truth, in a case where they have such an opportunity to thump the pulpit as they have here.

THE state of Massachusetts has become quite appropriately a microcosm in which the national Republican drama is being enacted in miniature. A bitter struggle is going on between the forces of Lodge and Butler. The Butler-Coolidge machine is to support Speaker Gillett in his candidacy for the Senate. It is also bringing to the front new faces, like Professor Churchill, of Amherst, who will probably be the machine candidate for Gillett's place. The state delegation to Cleveland was full of novitiates. But in character and past experience every one of them is as confirmed and regular a machine man as Lodge himself. Thus Professor Churchill, no less than President Burton, whom Coolidge has chosen for the keynote oratory, is known among his academic colleagues as a died-in-the-wool politician and an inveterate machine man both in college and in state politics.

Victory by Default

IN Cleveland during the current week President Coolidge will be almost unanimously renominated by the Republican National Convention. The delegation from Wisconsin will enter a formal protest against the platform and the candidate, but otherwise the Republican party, to judge by its speeches and performances in convention assembled, will sound like a well trained orchestra. It has swept aside, without any appearance of being ruffled, the only candidate who contested the President's nomination. Mr. Coolidge's victory looks like a walk-over. He has created the impression in many minds that he is immensely popular, that his nomination is in essentials the duplication of that of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Roosevelt in 1904. It is merely a preliminary canter to a fast campaign and a triumphant election.

The truth is, of course, something entirely different. The apparent unanimity of President Coolidge's nomination has a significance which is precisely the opposite of what it appears to be. It is not an expression of satisfaction with the candidate, of confidence in his leadership or of any unity of outlook and feeling within the party. On the contrary it is a sullen furtive compensation for the absence of all these things. The apparent unity of the Republicans does not spring from integrity of conviction, from the discussion and reconciliation of differences or from reciprocal loyalties among the many individuals, classes and sections which make up the party. It is the unity of an army which purges its rolls and closes its ranks before going into battle. The Republican party, or rather the unprogressive fraction of it, has wrenched itself together by agreeing until the campaign is over to forget its differences, ignore its failures and to repress its disloyalties. Its unanimity is necessitated by its internal weakness. Its leaders have not dared to allow their divergent tendencies to get expressed and to bring about the contest of interests, principles and candidates in which they would naturally result.

If the Republican party still possessed its former political vitality, it would not have submitted to President Coolidge's nomination without a stiff contest—the kind of contest which prevented Chester Arthur's renomination in 1884. Of course any Vice-President who, like Arthur, Roosevelt and Coolidge, succeeds to the Presidency, is certain to bid for the nomination and is able, owing to his control of the Federal patronage, to go into the convention with several hundred delegates. But his party has not the same reason to submit to his demand that it has in the case of a President whom it elected to fill the office. The validity of the claim depends upon whether he is able, like Roosevelt in 1904, successfully to take over the leadership of his party and to create a personal following among the masses of his fellow citizens. This Mr. Coolidge has not done. His humble origin and his homely appearance and manner of life appealed for a while to many Americans who, like him, started life in a farm house. Later when he stood so firmly behind the Mellon plan of tax reduction, he had a moment of the utmost popularity with the business men of the East and the urban newspapers, but he paid dearly for this initial success. It deceived him into thinking that he had won the confidence of the great majority of his party and of the American people. He went ahead on that supposition. He never made even an intelligent attempt to alleviate the economic grievances of the western farmers. He has intensified instead of soothing the dissensions within the party. Congress, including a large majority of the Republican senators and representatives, finally flouted his leadership on the immigration question, the bonus and the tax bill. He has become little by little a weak rather than a strong candidate. The Republican politicians all know it. They all admit it in private. They do not like him. They do not believe in his leadership. They look forward with something like dread to the campaign. They realize that only a fortunate accident or the errors of opponents can bring a successful result. Yet they nominate him with practical unanimity.

The Republican party is really acting under the influence of an instinct of self-preservation of which its own members are only partly conscious. The revelations of the Walsh and Wheeler committees have impaired the confidence of its members in their leaders and in one another. Its prestige is, for the time being, shattered. The case against the record and the leadership of the party during the past four years is so overwhelming that there is practically nothing to be said in answer or even in extenuation. In such circumstances they could not risk a contest. They had to put up with the candidate who could wield the most power and who could make it most disagreeable for opposing candidates. President Coolidge is, consequently, being nominated by default. He is not entitled to the honor and has done nothing to deserve it. He cannot be elected except as a result of a further default by his opponents. He can get one base on balls, but he can hardly reach the home plate by the same means.

There is nothing in the records of American party government analogous to the spectacle presented by the Republican party before and during the Cleveland convention. It is exhibiting at practically the same time a fantastic combination of flagrant disagreement and of victorious harmony. Only a few weeks ago it was ignoring Coolidge's recommendations and over-riding his vetoes. In fact the one course of action upon which Republican congressmen and senators seemed to be most thoroughly agreed was that of defying and belittling the President. Mr. Wilson himself was never treated with more active hostility by his Republican opponents than Mr. Coolidge is by his Republican friends. Yet now these same people are nominating him and are appealing to their fellow countrymen to re-elect him on the ground that he will govern the country safely and efficiently. Of course he cannot govern it at all. Except for routine purposes the Republican party as an agency of government has become a joke—a grim and sinister joke, but still a joke. It does not know its own mind. It cannot pass any important legislation except with the consent of its enemies. It is divided against itself in its attempt to govern. It is united only in the will to seize power, to hold power and to profit by the exercise of power.

It is time for intelligent Republicans to understand how demoralizing it is for a national party to be united almost exclusively by avidity for power rather than by some community of understanding,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

feeling, tradition and policy. The propaganda of the Republicans during the coming campaign will necessarily be cheap and violent. They will be forced to depend for their appeals to the voters chiefly upon the abuse of opponents. They cannot point to the achievements of the last four years with pride, for their administrative record is shameful, and their legislative record, except in collaboration with other parties, either dubious or barren. Neither can they insist upon the wonderful benefits which they will confer on their countrymen if only they are returned to power. They have just proved themselves incapable of originating and passing the kind of economic legislation which the country needs. Their speakers will be almost obliged, consequently, to follow the lead of men like Adams, Lockwood and Daugherty. They will have to bluster and to treat the Democrats and progressives with the same kind of medicine with which they dosed Senators Walsh and Wheeler individually. They will, of course, accuse the progressives of proposing to assist the Third International in hoisting the red flag over the White House and of undermining the foundations of legal and social order. They will invent some means of charging the Democrats with threatening the prosperity of American business and with a tendency to some awful heresy like socialism or pacifism. In short they will in substance ask the electorate to approve of a party whose recent record is disgraceful, which cannot agree upon a common policy for dealing with the immediate economic needs of the common people, and which is incapable of self-reform—it will ask them to support this party on the pretext that it is the only safe custodian of the essential interests of American society. And the party which makes this appeal will include in the opinion of its members the most capable men of action, the best minds, and the most scrupulous consciences in the United States.

The Future of the Estate Tax

THE recently enacted tax law is a compromise, not wholly satisfactory at all points to any party. On the income tax schedules, however, the differences are mainly quantitative. Everybody accepts the principle of an income tax, with progression according to the size of the income. Men ought to be taxed, it is agreed, in proportion to their ability to pay, and ability increases more rapidly than income. In the case of the estate tax differences of opinion are far deeper. They involve principles of social and economic policy. Should we tax the estate, or the separate inheritance? If we tax the estate should we make the rates stiffly progressive? If we tax inheritances, should we graduate the tax not only in proportion to size, but also on the basis of degree of kinship? Should inheritance and estate taxes be levied by the federal government or by the states? It is hard to find two persons who will agree on the answers to these questions. And with opinion so uncertain it may safely be assumed that we have not yet reached a solution that will stand.

This is not to say that there is any doubt that inheritance taxes under one form or another are a permanent part of our revenue system, federal or state. Merely viewed as income, an inheritance is a most appropriate object of taxation, since it falls to its recipient without personal effort, and represents a surplus above his customary standards of consumption. In a democracy such taxes are an effective means for preventing the establishment of large hereditary estates. So much may be granted, yet we need to think out more systematically than we have done the principles on which such taxes should be based.

We shall not need to linger long over the question whether the estate in its entirety or the separate inheritance should be the basis of taxation. One man dies leaving a million dollars to ten heirs; another dies leaving a million dollars to a single heir. The estate tax, now a part of our federal system of taxation, collects equal amounts from both estates. From the point of view of the heirs this is unfair. One who receives an inheritance of $1,000,000 could afford to pay more than ten times the tax paid by one who receives an inheritance of $100,000. When, as is the case with our federal law, the tax is graduated with the size of the estate the unfairness appears even more forcibly in another aspect. The heir to one tenth part of a million is taxed more heavily than the sole heir to $100,000.

From the social point of view the plan of levying upon the estate instead of the inheritance is still more unsatisfactory. It is not the size of the estate, but that of the separate inheritance, that concerns a democracy which seeks to maintain a fair degree of equality. Moreover, the estate tax is not adapted to drawing the distinctions between direct and collateral heirs that almost all men agree must be drawn if death duties are not to discourage the accumulation and productive use of property.

Here then is a reform which is obviously needed: the substitution of taxes on the separate inheritance for taxes on the estate, whether the taxes are levied by the state or the federal government. Our state taxes are already on the inheritance basis. It remains for the federal law to be brought into uniformity with them.

This opens another question which has been much discussed of late. Should the federal government tax inheritances at all, in view of the fact that a majority of the states are doing so? Might not such double taxation result in sheer confiscation? The answer to this question has been worked out in the recently enacted federal law. Abate the federal tax by the amount collected by the states, up to a reasonable limit. With this principle accepted

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

there is much to be said for a federal tax. Such a tax would put an end to the quasi-bribery by which some states induce the rich to establish residence in order to enjoy low rates of inheritance taxes or to escape such taxes altogether on the greater part of their estates.

A suggestion made many years ago by Professor E. R. A. Seligman is worth reviving in this connection. Let the federal government collect the inheritance taxes and turn back a specified percentage to the states. Since our economic system is national, and it is impossible to determine in what particular states a given fortune is earned, the wisest plan would be to base such a distribution of inheritance tax funds on the population. Thus Nevada would share in the taxes on an inheritance received, we will say, by a resident of Kentucky from an estate domiciled in New York. This is only fair because Nevada probably helped, through trade and industry, to build up the estate.

President Coolidge and Secretary Mellon have criticized the estate tax bill on still another ground: that it is essentially a capital levy and tends to apply to the current expenditure of government funds that had been accumulated for productive use. This objection applies obviously to the state inheritance taxes as well as to the federal estate tax. Such taxes, the President and Mr. Mellon further point out, may inflict an injury upon the heirs to an estate quite out of proportion to the revenue received by the government, since they may force the liquidation of assets at sacrifice prices. They may also disturb all market relations, through the throwing on the market of large blocks of securities.

These difficulties could be obviated by a relatively simple change in our treatment of inheritance taxes. Let it be frankly recognized that these are capital taxes, not taxes on ordinary income. And let it further be recognized that government, like the private individual, ought to meet its current expenditures out of the regular income flow. It does not follow that the state and nation should avoid capital taxes. But it should keep the sums received from such taxes in the form of a permanent capital.

If the state and federal governments pursued this policy all sums received through inheritance or estate taxes would be invested productively and only the income from such investments would be available for ordinary expenditures. The government receiving such funds would eventually invest them in gilt-edged securities—probably federal or state bonds. But it would not be necessary to proceed inconsiderately to the liquidation of other forms of property found in the estate or inheritances. The government, operating through trustees, would merely claim its share in an estate, contenting itself with its proper share of the income until liquidation could be effected without loss.

If this principle were adopted of keeping intact capital obtained through inheritance or estate taxes, the state would eventually become a large capitalist, deriving a regular income from the functioning of economic society. Such a source of public revenue would be considered undesirable by those who regard the dependance of government on the taxpayer as an essential check upon wasteful and arbitrary political action. This difficulty could be met, however, by assigning such revenues to particular services which ought in any event to be above the political struggle, such as universities, hospitals, funds for the care of neglected children, old age pensions, etc.

In thus assigning to permanent social services the capital obtained by the state through inheritance taxes the government would be following the principles already worked out more or less consciously by private persons who recognize the social obligation attaching to large estates. We should then be clearer than we are now as to the principles to be followed in the taxation of gifts. Such gifts as amount merely to the transfer of enjoyment funds from one person to another should of course be taxed. But gifts designed to endow services or institutions of approved public character should not be taxed. On the contrary, it would be reasonable to place a premium upon the impulse to consign private resources to public purposes.

In the recent revision of the internal revenue laws the estate tax was treated as merely an issue incidental to the income tax. It deserved different treatment. Not only are there important questions of principle to be settled, as we have indicated, but also the details of exemption, progression according to magnitude of estate and degree of relationship of heirs need a thorough study such as no legislature has ever given them. We hope that in the near future the whole question of the taxation of estates and inheritances will be made the subject of a comprehensive legislative inquiry, with a view to the elaboration of a system of taxation compatible with democratic principles and progressive economics.

The La Follette Platform

THE proposed candidacy of Robert La Follette for the Presidency is not, of course, merely personal. More than any other American political leader he represents a cause. He is the spokesman of a group of national policies which, if he is elected, he will endeavor to translate into legislative and administrative acts. He will bolt from the Republican party not merely or chiefly because it nominated a man with the record of Calvin Coolidge for the Presidency but because it rejected with contempt and practically without consideration the Wisconsin progressive platform. In as much as this platform will probably play an important part in the campaign and will be exposed to the assaults of both Democratic and Republican orators, its material and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

meaning deserve careful scrutiny and honest evaluation.

It consists in the form which is available at the time of this writing of eleven planks. The first pledges the new party to a thorough cleansing and scouring of the executive departments. The second demands the recovery of the naval oil reserves, the revision of the laws under which the public domain is being alienated, the conservation of natural resources and the development of a "national" super-power system. The third proposes the repeal of the Esch-Cummins railroad law and the public ownership of railroads. The fourth denounces the Mellon tax plan, calls for rigid economy by the government, particularly in the expenditures on army and navy, and favors heavy inheritance and excess profits taxes and publicity for federal tax returns. The fifth asks for the submission of a constitutional amendment providing that Congress by reënacting a statute may make it prevail over a judicial veto. In the sixth there is lumped a series of reforms which are intended specially to benefit the farmer, including a "drastic" reduction of the tariff, the reconstruction of the federal reserve system, the reduction of freight rates on farm products and the promotion of coöperation. There is no proposal which looks in the direction of valorization. The seventh declares against the use of the injunction in labor disputes and for the protection by the government of the industrial and agricultural workers in the exercise of their right to organize and do business and bargain collectively. The eighth refers to the bonus and is no longer of much importance. The ninth proposes a deep waterway from the Great Lakes to tide-water. The tenth seeks amendments to the Constitution which will provide for the direct nomination and the direct election of the President, the extension of the initiative and referendum to federal legislation and for the authorization of war only by a popular referendum except in case of an actual invasion. Finally there is a plank which reprobates a foreign policy which is controlled by "financial imperialists, oil monopolists and international bankers" and which demands that the American government undertake negotiations to revise the Versailles Treaty in accordance with the terms of the Armistice and to frame treaties with all nations which will outlaw war and diminish armaments.

This program is sharply and most significantly distinguished from the last serious attempt to formulate a liberal American national policy—the Progressive platform of 1912. Twelve years ago progressivism meant to the followers of Theodore Roosevelt chiefly the restoration of American government to popular control by means of reforms in its machinery and the subsequent use of this democratic engine in the interest of a program of social justice. It was essentially a political agitation which depended for its motor energy on the active interest which it could generate among its members in the welfare of the whole people. At its height during the campaign it effervesced into a species of political revivalism which was sincere enough, but which was not rooted in the permanent habits and practices of the revivalists. The progressivism of 1924 exhibits in the planks on the proposed restriction of the judicial veto and on direct government a survival of the political bias of 1912, but its emphasis is radically different. It is a frank demand for a better recognition of the economic interests of two large classes which are considered to have been the victims of economic discrimination from the government as conducted both by the Democratic and Republican parties—the farmers and the wage-earners. The grievances of the farmer, however, bulk much larger in this program than do those of union labor. It seeks to remedy these grievances in part by diminishing the privileges of more favored classes and in part by using the resources of the government positively in favor of the agricultural and the urban workers. It will derive its momentum not from humanitarian enthusiasm or from an abstract desire for social service but from the natural impulse of certain economically disfavored classes to employ the ballot in asserting their own interests against those of their more privileged associates.

The progressivism of 1924 is, consequently, a more realistic political insurrection than that of twelve years ago. It no longer assumes, as did the reformers of the past, that the motive power which is necessary to bring about drastic redistributions of economic power and opportunity can originate in the desire of the ordinary voter to promote the public welfare. Of course such a motive must exercise a real influence upon the political behavior of millions of Americans or else the Republic will not endure, but it cannot work independently of economic interests and practices. Its function is to correct and adjust rather than to give energy and direction to the political behavior of large economic classes. The present is, as the progressives believe, a period during which a readjustment of the privileges and power of the several economic classes is bound to take place. The farmers in particular are receiving a much smaller share of the national dividend than formerly and are suffering either from frustrated expectations and a lower standard of living or else from actual ruin. They have pleaded for relief from the existing parties, but they have not obtained it. The Republican and Democratic leaders either cannot grasp the idea that the agrarian crisis calls for constructive legislative action or else they cannot reconcile themselves to the consideration of remedies which are sufficiently radical to meet the emergency. They appraise the farmer's distress as the result of one of those economic ebb tides which at one time or another may afflict any community or class and which will in the fullness of time correct itself.

Thus the issue raised by the proposed La Follette candidacy and platform turns chiefly upon the difference in significance which its supporters and op-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ponents attach to the existing agricultural distress. The progressives attribute it to a discrimination in favor of industrial occupations and urban life which is fostered by the economic policy of the national government, which cannot be checked without revision of that policy and which, unless it is checked, will disastrously impair the quantity and quality of American agricultural communities. The Republicans and to a less extent the Democrats attribute it to fugitive causes. They are counting upon a gradual automatic readjustment which will restore the prosperity of the American farmer, quiet the subversive political agitation and bring about a period of comparative composure similar to that which followed upon the failure and subsidence during the last decade of the last century of agrarian Populism. If they are right, the progressivism of 1924 will, as an effective political movement, prove to be as evanescent as that of 1910-12. On the other hand if the progressives are right they are combating a permanent discrimination against agriculture which is characteristic of modern industrialism and which a wise statesmanship will seek to counteract rather than to encourage. The progressive platform and the candidacy of La Follette are the beginning of a prolonged and indispensable effort to build up a party political engine which is capable of carrying out a policy of agricultural restoration.

Any judgment passed upon the planks of the La Follette platform which fails to take account of the foregoing considerations will simply be irrelevant. If a new party is to be organized which may in the end be capable of restoring agriculture to its proper place in our national economy, it must begin by building impregnable political intrenchments in that section and in those states which are suffering most cruelly from the discrimination against agriculture. In so far as it is successful in this limited political objective it may obtain sufficient strength to exercise the balance of power between the two old parties. It will then be time to decide upon the permanent scope and the fully developed policy of the new party. Thus the La Follette platform is framed chiefly to promote the domination of the progressives in a sufficient number of states of the west and northwest to prevent the Democrats and Republicans from obtaining a majority either in the Electoral College or Congress. It does not pretend to be a mature, severely tempered and many-sided collection of political and economic policies, which will supply the progressives all over the country with a focus and a faith. It is rather an attempt to mobilize for an immediately effective political purpose the grievance of those farmers who have suffered most severely from the discrimination in favor of industry and urban life. Progressives who object to its class bias and resent its obvious limitations should remember how all-important it is for an insurrection against the two older parties to begin by demonstrating its voting power. Sound politics demands, of course, something more than the exercise of power, but in the absence of the exercise of power there can be no effective politics. The progressivism of 1912 was furnished with an abundance of good will, enthusiasm and principles, but it occupied no political strongholds and it flourished no weapon but words. The progressivism of 1924 is more vital because it sees an opportunity of controlling a sectional and class stronghold. It is justified in taking advantage of the opportunity. It cannot survive by any other means.

Its enemies will attack it fiercely as a class political agitation which if it prevails will sacrifice the other classes ruthlessly to an ignorant and selfish agrarianism. So far as the present campaign is concerned it cannot transcend the limits of a class agitation, because only by emphasizing the grievances of the farmers can it establish a defensible insurrectionary fortress in the rich meadows of the American party system. It will be time enough to consider how it ought to adjust the interests of the farmers to those of other classes after it has established its right to live and to participate in American government. But in the meanwhile progressives need not be disturbed by the abuse which will be hurled at them as the advocates of class and sectional warfare. They are really fighting on behalf of an improved balance and harmony among American economic classes. If the policy of the Republican party continues to prevail the American farmer is destined to become an economic analogue of the European peasant. The economic and social energy of the nation will be drained off into the cities just as it has been in England; and the residue which is left on the farm will be condemned to inferiority by its own lack of vitality and ability. The progressives are organizing for the purpose of preventing the farmer as a class from sinking into this condition of permanent economic and social inferiority. Their platform, one-sided as it is and doubtful as are some of its planks, is fundamentally the expression of a determination that the United States should remain in sufficient part a territorial democracy whose national policy makes for a balanced development both of industry and agriculture, of town and country.

THE NEW REPUBLIC

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1924, IN THE U. S., BY REPUBLIC PUBLISHING CO., INC., 421 W. 21ST ST., NEW YORK.

HERBERT CROLY, PRES. ROBERT HALLOWELL, TREAS. DANIEL MEBANE, CIRCULATION MANAGER.

EDITORS

HERBERT CROLY BRUCE BLIVEN ROBERT LITTELL
ALVIN JOHNSON R. M. LOVETT STARK YOUNG

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JANE ADDAMS JOHN DEWEY R. H. TAWNEY
DAVID FRIDAY H. N. BRAILSFORD LEO WOLMAN

RATES: SINGLE COPIES, FIFTEEN CENTS; YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, FIVE DOLLARS; CANADIAN, FIVE DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS; FOREIGN, SIX DOLLARS; THREE MONTHS' TRIAL, ONE DOLLAR.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CONTEMPORARY PORTRAITS

III. The Signer of the Tax Bill

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Hail to the Accidental Chief!

THE deed is done. The die is cast. These lines, of course, are being written in advance of the event; but few things in life are surer than it is that before they appear in print, or at most a few hours thereafter, Calvin Coolidge will have been nominated by his party for President.

Certainly a worse choice might have been made. There are a number of Republicans less suited to fill the Presidential chair. Yet I see no reason why we should not frankly face the facts and recognize that he is in no sense a genuine choice either of his party or of the people in general; that he is conspicuously lacking in those qualities which ought to be required of any aspirant to such high office. He is, in fact, just exactly as well qualified and no more so than he was a year ago today, when he was not deemed strong enough even for renomination as Vice-President; or than he was four years ago when a popular myth crediting him with a part in the Boston police strike which he did not play made him momentarily a headline hero but was able to produce only the feeblest, soonest-punctured of Presidential booms.

While, as I say, I see no reason for not facing the facts frankly, I recognize that many of my fellow citizens are in violent disagreement with this view. Facing the facts is the last thing in the world they desire. In an issue of this paper which appeared a few days after the death of Warren G. Harding, I published estimates of the characters of both these men, as honestly impartial and fair as I knew how to make them. I was promptly denounced by the usual proportion of letter writers—not because they believed my statements wrong, but on the general theory that it is wicked to tell the truth about a President unless that truth happens to be flattering. Ninety-five per cent of these letters were concerned with what I had said about Mr. Harding; and I am certain that if my two estimates were republished today, the critics would rise en masse to complain solely of my alleged hostility to Mr. Coolidge. In August, 1923, Harding was a myth and Coolidge wasn't; but in June, 1924, the former had shrunk—pitiably, in fact; and the latter has been inflated in a way which would perhaps be equally pitiable could we but see with history's eyes. As a people we seem to feel a deep-seated compulsion to attribute to our President superhuman perfection of intellect and character and to resent any contrary view. It is, I suppose, a sort of anthropomorphism; we insist on being ruled by a god created after our own image and if the titular chief lacks proper qualities we invent them.

The human mind is frail. It is almost impossible to dissent from absurd adulation without going to an unjustifiable extreme in the other direction. Mr. Coolidge's opponents generally attribute to him characteristics quite as remote from reality as those found by the persons who have suddenly discovered in him a combination of all merits after having for years ignored him as pointedly as possible. In particular, his detractors now ascribe to him greater powers, a more complete and active desire to serve the interests of conservatism, than he possesses.

For my own part, I see no reason to change the opinion created by a first interview with him, when still Governor of Massachusetts, an opinion deepened by subsequent meetings, by talking to his friends and reading what he has written. There is nothing mysterious about him. He is a Yankee through and through—a Yankee of the current vintage. Every one is aware that the human stock in New England has been depleted during the sixty years since the Civil War. Generally speaking, the best, most energetic and able members of each generation since then have moved away, to take advantage of the opportunities for individual advancement to be found in New York or in the development and growth of the middle and far West. Those left behind have all too often been only coupon-cutting rich men's sons—or the victims of inertia and timidity.

In the career of Coolidge I am aware of not a single instance where he has taken any other than the path of least resistance. It is true that he progressed rapidly in political life, and was made Governor of Massachusetts at an early age. But every student of politics knows that success in getting elected to office has little meaning. There is an extraordinary dearth in this country of men even moderately intelligent and able who are willing to be candidates at all. Our civilization offers its biggest rewards to those who follow business or a profession; and it is usually a safe deduction that the man who is willing to spend the best years of his life acting as public official, with a salary which means genteel poverty, is one who feels himself unfit for the keen competition of a career in a profession or in the industrial world. It was Ed Howe of Kansas who invented the formula: "Success easier than failure." This is assuredly true when the "success" inheres in being a regular, orthodox candidate for one office after another, always "in the hands of your friends," always attempting a next step only modestly in advance of the last.

Several people have argued that Mr. Coolidge at various points in his career has shown conspicuous courage. After studying the record with some care I am unable to agree with this view. The episode of the police strike must be ruled out of evidence because its authenticity is, to say the least, strongly disputed. Typical of all the other instances is the recent veto of the bonus. I submit that it is no sign of strength to perform an action which is demanded by an overwhelming majority of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

your friends, by your own class in the population in general, and by the newspapers which you most admire. When Mr. Coolidge does something over the frenzied protest of Messrs. Butler and Stearns, when he hurls defiance in the teeth of the New York Herald-Tribune and the Boston Transcript, the question of courage may be properly reopened.

There was a time when the official Coolidge propaganda laid great stress on his taciturnity. He was hailed as the inventor of the five hundred word speech. Most Americans are self-conscious, talk too much in consequence, and regard with veneration any one with sufficient control to keep still. But lately the President's publicity experts have decided for some reason that taciturnity is a handicap. Therefore, the papers are now being filled with stories about his garrulity. It is true that he has lately been making an effort to seem less like a human slot-machine from which you never get more than one stick of gum for your penny; and the attempt is as transparent and as pathetic as was that of Mr. Hughes in 1916 to transform himself overnight from aloof and learned Justice into hail-fellow-well-met, dog-patter and baby-chin-chucker.

For despite the hysterical efforts of the politicians to pretend that it is so, men do not suddenly in middle life change the whole nature of their being. Coolidge was saying little a year ago solely and simply because he had little to say. What was true then is true now; and the fact is not concealed by causing him to say his little in more words.

He has no small talk: a fact which is often stated as though it guaranteed that he has any quantity of big talk—which by no means necessarily follows. His private conversation, when of a voluntary character, is likely to be confined to the simplest of homely comment on the things around him. The sight of a plate of bean soup on an adjoining table in the Senate restaurant has been sufficient to set him off on a fifteen-minute monologue, comprising almost two hundred words, on the merits of that dish. Contrariwise, his speeches when he is not compelled to deal with a concrete theme, consist wholly of abstract ideas, without a vestige of reality about them. He recites, in rather good simple English, a string of copy-book maxims with about as much relation to the real problems of today as Caesar's description of an army bridge. When he is relaxed in the society of one of his few close personal friends Mr. Coolidge has traces of sardonic New England humor; but none of this gets into his public presentation of the contents of his mind.

In that fact lies, I think, the clue to the most interesting fact about him. The President, though his physical health is robust, is decidedly lacking in vitality, in that mysterious spark which makes the difference between a Theodore Roosevelt and a King George V. In Mr. Coolidge the vital forces of personality burn low. For that reason he finds difficult many of the simple processes of life which to other people are easy. Specifically, he finds it very hard to make decisions. Many admiring words have been written about the obstinate way in which he clings to a point of view once he has arrived at it; but this in itself, I think, demonstrates the irresolution which is native to him. It is the weak and anxious swimmer who most firmly refuses to leave a raft once he has reached it.

A man of this type will not only procrastinate as long as possible when required to take a firm stand, but will delegate all the responsibility he can to others. That he will be conservative is as inevitable as that he will invariably want a crowd with him and will refuse to move alone. Even under the advice of his friends he will find it impossible to do anything dramatically decisive.

The impulse of such an individual, particularly if the order of his native intelligence is not high enough to enable him ordinarily to think through all the consequences of a possible line of action, will be to sit tight. Confronted by evidence of widespread and shocking corruption among important members of the administration of which he is now head, he will not even for a moment dream of seizing the whip to drive the money changers from the temple. Instead, he will first utter that copy-book maxim about honesty which seems most appropriate to the circumstances, and will then do as near to nothing as is humanly possible. If the charges against a member of his official family mount so high that they cannot be ignored, the resignation of that member will be requested for an absurdly trivial pretended reason. When another member of his cabinet is under fire, he will be quite willing to send a message to the Senate protesting on fantastic grounds that constitutional rights are being invaded. The illogicality of such an argument he will consider unimportant beside the advantages that it postpones trouble, and is satisfactory to the members of his own group.

Such a mind as this is, in the last analysis, ruled by inertia and by fear. There are, as I have said, virtues which accompany these characteristics. There is incorruptible personal honesty. Reluctance to arrive at decisions is a habit of mind which is capable of working the people good as well as ill. But it does not need great political acumen to realize that these are not the qualities the United States needs in the White House today. With popular faith in the Federal government so gravely shaken as it has been by recent disclosures, there was never more urgent need for an executive who shall be drastic, dynamic, filled with something of the Covenanter's wrath for righteousness. The spectacle of a great political convention at such a time, meeting and unanimously choosing as its candidate to guide the nation for the next four years a man to whom most of the party leaders feel themselves superior in every way—that spectacle is a commentary on our political system which speaks louder than all the text-books on government ever written.

BRUCE BLIVEN.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

New Japan and Old China

IF the history of the Far East since the Washington Conference had to be compressed into the popular outline form it could be stated in two sentences. Japan has abandoned its aggressive imperialism. China has retrograded still further politically.

As the first represents clear gain and the second was to be expected anyway, there is no particular reason for pessimism. Diagnosing the different parts of the world in 1924, one can say the Far East is, by comparison, healthy. This, despite the despondent note sounded in all contemporary writing from and about the Far East.

Twenty years ago Japan succeeded to Russia as the aspirant to rulership over the eastern half of Asia. Being in the Far East itself, it had a better chance to realize its ambition, and during and after the World War it made fast progress. It had subjugated Korea, was in occupation of a large part of Siberia, had the government of China under its thumb and was putting more and more of China itself under its dominion. Its progress was alarming, and in consequence the political clouds that periodically have burst in war over the Far East in the last hundred years were gathering again. For the first time America was entangled and practically certain to be one of the antagonists.

The Washington Conference was not so much the marking of a period as the formal writing of a question mark. Japan was at the parting of the ways. Which would it take? Fortunately, it chose the safer road, safer for itself and for the rest of the world. It deflated its ambition. So far as the record of the last two years shows, it has given up aggression with the aim of acquiring political hegemony over China.

The evidence is negative rather than positive. It is not so much what Japan has done as what it has not done; rather, that it has done nothing. The test was not what it would do, but whether it would refrain from doing. That was all that was asked of Japan: to leave China alone. So much may be credited to Japan. It has not committed in the last two years any of the acts that had aroused suspicion against itself in the preceding years. It has not been subsidizing any party in China. It has not been inciting one party against another with promises of support in order to keep the country in a state of civil strife. (There has been civil strife in China recently but it has not been of Japanese making.) Japan has not been keeping dummy governments in power in Peking and compelling them, as a condition of their remaining in power, to grant it monopolistic privileges or negotiate loans which cannot be repaid and result in the forfeiture of Chinese sovereign rights and possessions to the Japanese lenders. These are the acts which kept China in turmoil, demoralized its government, poisoned the public life of the country and aroused the international antagonisms that made the atmosphere of the Far East dangerous. From them Japan has refrained.

In consequence, cherchez le Japonais is no longer the rule in the Far East. It was fashionable at one time to blame Japan for any unfortunate event in China, whatever its nature. As an Englishman once said: "It has come to the point where if a Chinese cabinet minister's wife runs off with her cook we lay it to Japanese intrigues." And most of the time one was right. That is no longer possible. Chinese issues have been cleared of a blurring factor. Chinese affairs have been freed of a permanent irritant. Anti-Japanese sentiment is less virulent among the Chinese, which is itself no small gain. On the part of other countries there is less ground for suspicion of Japan's motives.

Whether Japan's conversion is of the heart or of the head is not so important as that its works are as of one converted. It is more important, however, whether it was prompted by reason or fear. If Japan has given up aggression only because it was not strong enough to carry it out against the opposition of America and England, then a shift in international relations may cause it to revert to its old policy — such needless creating of issues and stimulating of national passions as the exclusion act just passed by the Senate, for instance. If Japan has given up aggression because convinced at last that only a policy which wins China's friendship will gain China's trade and access to China's resources, and that those are ample compensation for political hegemony, then it can be expected to have abandoned imperialism for good.

It is too early to make any definite analysis of Japan's motives. Probably it is impossible. No doubt they are mixed. There are those among the Japanese who always have regarded the Twenty-one Demands, the seizure of Shantung and the occupation of Siberia as mistakes in themselves. There are those among them who have come to regard them as mistakes only because Japan is not strong enough to stand by them in defiance of the whole world. There are those also who still refuse to concede they were mistakes and who believe Japan can and should defy the rest of the world. The latter I believe to be only a small chauvinistic minority. The first were increasing in number before the Washington Conference, and the disastrous consequences of the earthquake added to them those in the second class. Necessity and virtue probably have combined to give Japan morality. I see therein no cause for cynicism, because I know no country whose motivation is not the same. In fact, Japa-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

nese morality is more likely to be secure if founded on necessity.

In any case the facts are unchanged. Up to the present and as far as the record shows, Japan has been acting as one converted. Its relation to China is that of one nation trading with another, with the special advantage of being closer to China than any of its competitors, an advantage which geography has conferred upon it and to which none can make objection. So far as China and the rest of the world are concerned, it is of little consequence what are the motives if these are the facts. The results for the moment are equally good. China can exist, and another war is not in the making.

The affairs of China itself are less encouraging. There is no longer even semblance of national government. The powers go through the farce of recognizing the so-called Peking government and exchanging notes with it, but nobody is deceived. Provincial troops or bandits attack our nationals. We send a note of protest to the foreign office. The foreign office replies with an expression of regret and encloses a copy of its order to the offending official or bandit chief to cease. The recipient thumbs his nose and repeats the offense. The Peking government has no more power to do anything about it than the mayor of Kansas City, and the government, the bandit chief and the diplomatic representatives in Peking all know that. But the diplomatic proprieties have been satisfied. The next time the same circle is solemnly described.

The fact is there is no government. Politically there is no such thing as China. The mandate of the central government does not run twenty miles from the capital. Provinces and parts of provinces are independent. Local officials subject to no authority or control raise private armies, commandeer railways, seize public revenues, collect taxes, levy tribute on cities, banks and business houses, rob the rich, give their troops free rein in looting and conduct personal and private wars. Bandits swarm almost everywhere, almost always unchecked. Foreign and domestic trade has suffered and millions of Chinese have been victimized. If there is order at all it is only because the Chinese are by nature the most law-abiding people in the world. There is order as a matter of fact, and there has been a prodigious amount of exaggeration about the chaos that prevails, but it is indisputable also that authority has broken down completely and that banditry is rife over large areas.

In this there is cause neither for surprise nor for pessimism. It is only what was predictable with mathematical certainty five years ago and could have been foreseen even before. It is the product of certain definite forces within China and as inevitable as the operation of the law of gravity. The blame, if there is blame at all, is not on China alone. It must be divided equally with time and the influence of the foreign powers.

The republic has been a failure. It had to be. Not because it is a republic but because it came at this time. Any other form of government would have been. A certain stage had arrived in a cycle of China's history. A hundred years ago the Manchu dynasty had already become decadent and was losing its hold on the country. Government began to break down at that time. Then Western ideas and Western military power entered to accelerate the breakdown, the first naturally and legitimately, the second arbitrarily and unscrupulously.

Western ideas weakened respect for absolute authority, both social and political, for the national and family hierarchy on which Chinese society is founded, for the ancient traditions, the old mores and tabus. The foreign powers through their aggressions discredited the government still further by showing the Chinese people its helplessness in protecting them from foreign attack. Railroads, telegraphs, factories and other elements of industrialism were introduced, for the control of which the loose, uncentralized monarchy was inadequate. The more new ideas and new conditions demanded a new form of government, the more foreign influence was exerted to prevent change. Every effort for reform which might have averted the present situation was obstructed by the foreign powers. They wanted a weak, unstable, corrupt government, from which they might extract more.

The powers gave support, both tangible and intangible, to every reactionary element. They bolstered up the Manchu dynasty in the Taiping rebellion in the 'fifties. They opposed the reform movement of 1898 and then put the reactionary and autocratic Empress Dowager back in power after the Boxer uprising two years later. It was with foreign loans, given against the warning of the progressive reform party, that Yuan Shih-k'ai was able to build up the big army which before his death nullified the republic and after his death broke up into the numerous little armies which now are the curse of the country. What we call pernicious Chinese militarism is of foreign making. If those countries which now solemnly warn China to reform had not obstructed every Chinese effort to reform throughout the last generation, reform might not now be so cryingly necessary.

The position of China in the last few years may be likened to that of a large, smoothly rounded boulder started rolling down a long hill. If no natural obstacles exist and no arresting force can be interposed, it will continue to roll down and the further it goes the faster it will go. China had already started downward many years ago. The republic came and proved a paper framework. No other arresting force was in sight. Five years ago it could have been safely predicted that five years later would find China still lower than it was then. Now it may be confidently predicted that five years from now will find China lower yet. Why not? There is no force visible yet within China strong

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

enough to stop its descent. And now it will take a long, long time to create one. Why, then, in 1930 be surprised if the inevitable has come?

A certain process of devolution, of disintegration even, has to be completed. Nothing on earth can stop it. All intelligent Chinese have ceased thinking of quack nostrums. Most of them did long ago. Only superficial boosterish foreigners with gusty, easy optimism—Americans, principally—and Chinese under foreign mental influence continued mixing nostrums and crying them up as quick and sure cures. "New" China was born again every year. And the next year died. The process must go on. How long it will take nobody can say. What will follow nobody can say. Chinese history, the soundness of the race and the solidity of its social foundations are reasons enough for believing that China will recover, rise again and flourish. In fact, there are better reasons for expecting that of China than of Europe. At the worst China's "chaos" is not so chaotic or so nearly hopeless as Europe's.

There is little point, then, in threshing ourselves into frenzies over China. There is still less point in the pharisaical advice, solemn warnings or empty threats with which we periodically shower China. There is nothing we can do about it. The present is the product of the past. The past cannot be undone. We can face the present, bad as it may be, and hold our patience through the immediate future, though it be worse. The only alternative would be to take over China and run it. That is to say, send about five million troops and spend about fifty billion dollars. And then we probably could do nothing. We can wait—or we can wait. Anyway there is much better cause for worry much closer home.

NATHANIEL PEFFER.

Behind Coolidge: Butler

An Expert is Sitting on the Lid

THE man whom President Coolidge has designated as the campaign director of the Republican party is a new figure in national politics. He is largely unknown outside Massachusetts. In a certain sense, of course, so is Mr. Coolidge. He, himself, if not a sectional, is certainly a provincial man. By stubborn nature he is silent and almost unsocial, loath to circulate jovially from camp to camp extending and consolidating his acquaintances after the manner of politicians. Except for his totally unassertive Vice-Presidency his career and associations lie wholly within his home state. He is said never to have been outside the country. There is something downright touching about his haste to surround himself with old personal friends upon Mr. Harding's death, Boston men, Amherst men, men whom he had come to know well in less embarrassed days.

In the first days of his sudden elevation it is well known that he leaned most heavily on Frank Stearns and William M. Butler. Mr. Stearns is an old college friend, later a Boston merchant of large means, who has for years more or less idolized the silent, lonely and almost grim young politician. The relationship is wholly personal. Mr. Stearns has dedicated himself to the service of a personal friend whom he has long conceived to be called of God to mighty things. Mr. Butler, also, has been generously attentive. He has sat at Mr. Coolidge's elbow times without number. He was most fruitfully on the job during the famous Boston police strike. Butler was an old friend and associate of Senator Murray Crane. In his later years the old czar of Massachusetts politics rather took to Coolidge as a likely youngster. Coolidge and Butler became acquainted as members of the fellowship of Murray Crane.

Mr. Butler appears to the country, then, as simply a Boston lawyer, a friend of Crane's and latterly an intimate of Coolidge. Like Mr. Stearns he is a wealthy man, owner of cotton mills and director of various corporations. He is sixty-three years old, a physically inconspicuous man, quiet and gray, erect and firm, and withal distinctly good-humored, a twinkle in his eye and a smile of mild amusement hovering about his mouth. He seemed slightly to enjoy the gay consternation of his fellow Bostonians at finding the campaign chairman suddenly in their midst. He is not a "mob-master" nor a "glad-hand artist." Rather he is a business executive, decisive and self-possessed. He is said never to hesitate and never to move incautiously. He is never known to raise his voice in anger or excitement. When occasion demands he can excoriate with biting but unruffled irony. He never talks too much. A perfect companion for the most silent President! Is Mr. Butler simply another politically inconspicuous personal friend of a shy, provincial and inconspicuous President? At this question, knowing Bostonians are apt to smile. No man in the country, they say, knows more about politics than Butler. For thirty years he has been a power in Massachusetts. He is now probably the chief power. If he is not generally known, that is partly because he has played with a "fine Italian hand," almost never appearing in person on Beacon Hill. It is also because he has not been a great protagonist. He has not fought and bled in great open battles for great popular causes. On the contrary he has sat inconspicuously upon the lid. They say in Bos-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ton that he must have stopped a good deal!

This is the senate theory of government: "The best government is the one that governs least." The federal Senate has always been a peculiarly aggravating obstacle to reformers in a hurry. Within the last few years its checking power has even become the most conspicuous political phenomenon in the world. Now the state senates were made from the same pattern, and the Massachusetts senate is no exception to the rule. It is the place where things are stopped. Twenty senators, acting as a "little group," can pretty effectively hold up whatever legislation may seem undesirable. Consequently the organization of the senate is, from this point of view, a very important political objective. For more than a generation that organization has been controlled effectively and practically continuously by the Republican party leaders. William M. Butler first "emerged" as president of the senate. His recent candidacy for the United States Senate, withdrawn when it seemed more necessary that he should head the National Republican Committee, was entirely consonant with his interests and abilities. He is a senate man by conviction, temperament and training.

As a very young and very penniless New Bedford lawyer, he came up to the legislature in 1890 in a "ten dollar black suit," according to one of his contemporaries. He served two years in the house and three in the senate, becoming president after only one year in that body. His immediate rise is evidence of an early rapprochement with Murray Crane, who was just at this time entering upon his long and most silently astute leadership of Massachusetts Republicanism. (He is the man for whom Roosevelt invented the term "pussyfoot.") In 1895 Butler left the senate and, establishing law offices in Boston, became legislative agent for Henry H. Rogers and his gas interests and for Henry M. Whitney, of street railway fame. Bostonians who are old enough, at least, to know, say further that Crane, who was not only boss but a paper magnate of parts and closely associated with many powers of Massachusetts industry, made Butler the recipient of much corporation business. At all events he did become counsel, presumably legislative counsel, for a rapidly growing list of corporations, insurance companies, cotton and woolen manufacturies and public utilities. In a remarkably short time he became a rich enough man to build cotton mills in his old home town, New Bedford, and to take a place in his own right as a not inconsiderable manufacturer and mill owner. Today he would most obviously class as a textile man, owner, director and counsellor of textile interests. As such, Mr. Coolidge's appointee is a man of distinctly sectional interests, of course.

Beyond what may be inferred as the result of a lucrative practice as corporation counsel, the original sources of Mr. Butler's wealth are naturally obscure. His early career falls in a period of very active street railway organization, with which he was not unconnected. About the time he was leaving New Bedford for Boston, Henry M. Whitney was opening up the West End line, out Boylston street way, with infinite real estate speculation, and consolidating the street railways of the city with infinite graft. Shortly after this the first elevated and subway lines were built under the aegis of a Morgan-Kidder Peabody group. A Lowell inventor, Joseph Meigs, had conceived the idea of a hanging, monorail, elevated service. He demonstrated his invention at various places but never got a commission to build. This group took over certain of his patents, obtained the necessary franchises, built the first elevated in the world on Washington street, leased the West End system, and found themselves in effective control of the street railways of the city. Shortly after, about the opening of the century, the Boston to Worcester street railway line was built and sent forth upon its voyage on a sea of watered stock. Generally speaking, it was a very ripe period. Boston was in the mushroom stage of public utilities. In this period, within the space of a decade or so, the New Bedford minister's son became first a legislator, then president of the senate, then corporation lobbyist, and then a rich man—a mill builder and corporation director. He was lobbyist for Whitney; he has been connected with the Boston and Worcester Street Railway Company from the beginning. (He is now president of it, and of the Boston and Worcester Electric Company.) He is said to be a very shrewd, careful and successful business man.

Yet his importance to Mr. Coolidge is not his wealth, but his political mindedness. He is no bigoted evangel of great wealth. In his labor policies, for instance, he is quite opportunist. There are no strikes in the Butler mills. But wage cuts are made when the times allow. Immediately after the war Mr. Butler took the lead in "wage deflation." On other occasions he has let well enough alone. Labor officials do not ignite at mention of his name and he has no public record as a face grinder. Recently a prospective wage cut was ordered cancelled. The New Bedford operatives say with a shrug that they are profiting from national politics. Among his colleagues, also, Mr. Butler is reputed an influence rather than a power. As a matter of fact he is not in point of financial magnitude quite the giant of industry he has sometimes, recently, been pictured. But he is conspicuous beyond his actual rated capacity because of his acute political sense and because he has been in personal touch with the State House. He has been the liaison officer, when dangerous legislation threatened.

On the other hand, President Coolidge cannot be said to have handed the reins to a political boss in the ordinary sense of that term. Mr. Butler is a very influential man. He is said to have dominated the distribution of patronage in the State House for some years. He was at all times useful

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

to Murray Crane. The present governor of Massachusetts is the brother of his junior partner. Yet he has never been the titular head of a close-knit political gang. Certainly he has none of the characteristics of a Murphy. He did not emerge gradually by natural promotion up the ladders of a political machine. He has never controlled a ward. Of course, neither did Crane. But Crane, though he was a rich man when he went into politics, and died possessed of nine millions, nevertheless made politics his major business. Commentators emphasize his gum-shoe technique. He was not a popular exhorter, nor a professional office seeker in the accepted sense. He uniformly deprecated his various official dignities. Yet throughout, office-holding—the massing of influence, the building and oiling of a machine—formed his career. Butler's career is business. He is a textile man and not a professional politician. Crane was a member of the party's national committee from 1892 on. Practically, he died in action in the convention of 1920. Mr. Coolidge's campaign manager has never sat on either body.

To assess him correctly one must consider the nature of a political machine on its financial side. A machine is a combination of politicians. To be effective it must control public offices, elective and appointive. To carry elections it must have money. There are, generally speaking, just two sources of revenue: graft and contributions. A machine may exist for the sake of graft and keep going upon the basis of graft. Or it may exist wholly upon contributions from interests that have no intent to loot the public treasury. Thus the British Labor party is supported largely by funds voted by the constituent unions, the theory being that it will create conditions favorable to labor and so will pay in the end. At all events, no raid on the public treasury is intended. The distinction between the two possible sources of income is important because the good works of a machine in power may be seriously affected by the nature of its revenue policy. A frankly predatory machine may loot the public treasury, holding up all factions with large impartiality. A strictly honest machine may open the public treasury with prayer, and be intolerably partial to the faction which supports it.

Now the most ready and affluent source of contributed support is obviously the rich, as individuals and as corporations. The contributions of corporations to the funds of a party machine may be made for a specified quid pro quo, most usually exemption from scrutiny and regulation. Blind General Brayton, for years boss of Rhode Island Republicanism, once testified in court that the New Haven Railroad paid him ten thousand a year to be let alone. On the other hand, contributions may be made, especially by wealthy men as individuals, with no consciously improper ulterior purpose. They may be actuated by the sincere belief that a given party machine, committed perhaps to a tradition and platform of salubrious inaction, will be "better for business," just as trade unions think a labor government better for labor. Certainly the larger business men have this triple advantage in bidding for the coöperation of a political machine: what they want is perfectly clear; it is readily attainable; the funds for its promotion are ample. This does not mean, of course, that there are no differences of opinion among business men. There are. Here is one. The investment bankers of the country are now largely free-traders, because we are now a creditor nation. Mr. Butler, as a textile man, is a natural and confirmed protectionist. High grade cottons are still coming into the country over the present tariff wall and he will want that raised. But the point is that over and above all specific differences Mr. Butler represents a faction which wants a government that will be "good to business" and can afford to pay for it. Already friendly prognosticators ar announcing with glee that there will be no trouble about money. Mr. Coolidge will be a kind President, and Mr. Butler's colleagues will pay the cost.

This is his rôle: he is the go-between who skillfully and silently unites the interests which want safe government and can pay the cost of getting it and the political machine which disposes the show window of candidates and issues, and manages the strategy of electoral conversion. He is probably not motivated primarily by the intention to get a gang, the Boston Republican machine, into the departments of the federal government, there to be a second Ohio gang. In the event of success in November there would probably be little of that. There is, indeed, little of it in Boston now. As a party leader Butler will observe the proprieties of the most upright business man. But there will be no Armageddon. Mr. Coolidge is not that kind of a man. Mr. Butler is not that kind of a man. And Mr. Butler is sitting on the lid.

C. E. Ayres.

Ranch of the Far

(*Tierra Caliente*)

Down on the ranch they brought in honey.
Manuel dug it out of a tree.
Jasmine swirled when the honeycomb broke.
The thick drops tasted a little of smoke,
A dusky flavor like oboes chuckling
Low in their throats. A flavor like tea
That comes from a Chinese jar I know,
But there was resonance in it too,
Sweetness inscrutable, mingled quince
And pomegranate blossom . . . The wild bees must
Have come home powdery with the dust
Of tiger orchids; and rosewoods grew
By the canyon river. It seemed to me
That gold dark honey was Mexico.
I have been tasting it ever since.

Grace Hazard Conkling.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Who Wants Child Labor?

TWICE Congress has created acts to outlaw child labor. Twice the Supreme Court, presented by the opposition with test cases, has declared the acts unconstitutional. So we have over a million children at work, under a sort of negative national consent.

The subject is again before the country. A Constitutional Amendment has passed both Houses of Congress and now goes to the state legislatures for ratification. At this moment it is particularly pertinent to inquire: Who is it that fights measures which protect children from premature labor? And with what cause?

It is not, as may be imagined, an organization of widowed mothers. True, many widows resent laws which deprive them of the pittances their children can earn. Yet the protesting widows are far fewer than the opposition represents them. Some one is exploiting the plight of these women, whose misfortune a humane state could meet in some saner way than by topping the loss of their husbands with the using up of their children.

No, the real protester is the industry which is making a present profit out of child labor.

Such industry is variously represented; sometimes by a leading citizen who believes himself when he rationalizes, "Children are better off in the factory than on the street;" whose imagination is too skimpy to entertain that axiomatic American ideal—a place in school for every child; who is abstractly sorry for the widow, and to whom a widow's pension from the state seems worse than working the widow's children. Sometimes he is different, and says bluntly, "Adult wages are too dear. Abolish child labor and you ruin my business."

The almost magic potency of this minority attitude suggests an inquiry into the actual economic importance of child labor to American industry. In pursuit of this we turn to the United States Department of Commerce and ask Secretary Hoover: *Can American industry afford to let the Child Labor Amendment be ratified?*

Mr. Hoover replies "Certainly," and gives illuminating statistics and comment. "The question of child labor is not the opposition of industry to the control of child labor, but that it should be equally controlled in every branch of a particular industry, so as not to set up unfair competition. I believe that industry in the large would welcome the Amendment. There were 30,661,000 persons gainfully employed in non-agricultural pursuits in 1920. Of these 1.7 percent were under sixteen years of age. In 1900 there were 18,622,000 so employed, of whom 3.7 percent were under sixteen years of age. Industry has prospered greatly in that twenty years. It has increased its product per person employed; it has accomplished this with a decrease in the number of children employed. Obviously this minute percent of children has no important relation to the productivity of American industry as a whole. And while the number of employed children in non-agricultural industry is about 1.7 percent of the whole, obviously children are not responsible for anything like even this percentage of production. It would seem probable that if all the children were taken out of employment tomorrow, it would not affect the productivity of the country by one-fourth of one percent."

An analysis of specific industries was in point: The coal mines in 1910 had 613,924 operatives, of whom 15,212, or 2.5 percent, were from ten to fifteen years old. By 1920 the children had decreased to 5,850, or 0.8 percent only of the 733,936 workers employed in 1920. The clothing industries in 1910 had 397,018 workers, of whom 19,157, or 4.8 percent, were children. By 1920 the children had decreased to 11,757, or only 2.8 percent of the 422,137 workers employed in 1920. The iron and steel industries in 1910 had 851,981 workers, of whom 14,372, or 1.7 percent, were children. By 1920 the children had decreased to 12,904, or 0.9 percent of 1,419,593 workers then employed. The lumber and furniture industries in 1910 had 485,515 workers, of whom 18,806, or 3.9 percent, were children. By 1920 the children had decreased to 10,585, or only 2.2 percent of the 489,332 workers then employed. The shoe factories in 1910 had 191,287 workers, of whom 8,393, or 4.4 percent, were children. By 1920 the children had decreased to 7,545, or 3.3 percent of the 225,435 workers then employed. The cotton mills in 1910 had 317,953 workers, of whom 40,572, or 12.8 percent, were children. By 1920 the children had decreased to 21,875, or only 5.8 percent of the 378,769 workers then employed. The silk mills in 1910 had 83,177 workers, of whom 8,851, or 10.6 percent, were children. By 1920 the number of children had increased to 10,023, but the percentage of children to the whole had decreased to 8 percent of the 125,801 workers employed in 1920. The woolen or worsted mills in 1910 had 117,476 workers, of whom 7,800, or 6.6 percent, were children. By 1920 the children had decreased to 7,077, or 4.8 percent of the 148,645 workers then employed.

Taking these industries all together, in 1910, of the 3,058,331 total workers, the 133,163 child workers formed 4.4 percent; whereas by 1920 the children had decreased to 87,616, and were only 2.2 percent of the 3,943,648 workers employed in 1920 in these eight industries. They formed just half the proportion of workers that they had formed in 1910.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Interpreting the figures for these selected industries, the Secretary of Commerce points out that the output of these industries increased steadily per person employed during the period parellel with a decrease in child employment; and that their prosperity is unchallenged.

American industry can afford the Child Labor Amendment. Indeed, a dispassionate consideration suggests the additional question, "Can American industry afford not to do away with child labor?"

There are certain economies which cannot be made without a minimum of prosperity. A poor man must often buy his coal extravagantly by the bushel for want of enough cash to purchase a ton. Is America too poor to afford the apparent economy of substituting adult workers for children? The million children at work seem a confession of terrible poverty. Yet an examination of America's prosperity shows that this is a poverty not of purse but of heart. Apparently we do not look upon child labor as a last resource, to be tapped only on the brink of prosperity. For we are rich enough to get along without the work of children. Indeed, increased production automatically offers more opportunity for work for children, along with the increased employment of adults; although in times of unemployment the hundreds of thousands of working children and the hundreds of thousands of unwillingly idle adults are parallel lines which never meet in our industrial imagination. The United States Children's Bureau has made an analysis of working certificates issued to children. The figures, which do not count in children who applied for vacation employment only, show an astonishing increase in such certificates since 1921, during which time our prosperity as a nation grew and increased:

Compare 1922 with 1921: Of thirty-five cities reporting to the Children's Bureau, twenty-one record an increase in first work permits issued, the increase ranging from 9 percent to 177.5 percent, in five instances over 100 percent.

First half of 1922 compared with first half of 1921: For twenty-eight cities furnishing monthly figures, the increase was 8 percent.

Last half of 1922 compared with last half of 1921: For twenty-eight cities furnishing monthly figures, the increase was 46 percent.

First half of 1923 compared with first half of 1922: Of thirty cities reporting, all but two reveal an increase in permits granted, the increase varying from 4.1 percent to 674.3 percent. In the two cases of decrease, the percentages were 31.7 and 5.1.

As has been suggested, it must not be thought that industry's interests are ranged solidly on one side, hostile against the children's interests. Many employers feel the need for a federal law to equalize competition between states. Some want such a law on the basis that manufacturers in states which give less protection to children than their own can sell their products more cheaply. Others believe that there is nothing immediately or remotely cheap about child labor, believe that the maturity and greater efficiency of adults, and their lesser liability to accidents make them more profitable than children; believe that the abolition of child labor will tend to increase the invention of labor-saving devices; and many maintain that manufacturers in states with higher standards for children have an actual ultimate advantage; for a state which assures its children a normal, healthy childhood and the advantage of mental training of an education is turning out a more competent adult labor supply, which will prove far more advantageous to that state's industries than the immediate cheapness with which the children's young fingers might present them. A state with poor child labor laws really suffers in competition with one more generous to children, although this is not generally recognized.

Indeed, the use of child labor in industry implies a strange indifference to gain; for, surely, it is a short-sighted carelessness which starts out a million citizens with the handicap of a stunted education if not actual illiteracy, which begins to manufacture on so wholesale a scale the incompetent adult labor supply which a million depleted worked-out childhoods must create.

Yet the real reason for passing the Child Labor Amendment is, of course, not economic. The consequent economic gain is only incidental. We cannot continue to let one out of every twelve of our ten to fifteen-year-old youngsters stagger into industry out of an amputated childhood. Child labor must be abolished because it is inhuman.

VIOLA PARADISE.

Slow Death

You need no other death than this
  Slow death that wears your heart away;
It is enough, the death that is
    Your every night, your every day.

It is enough, the sun that slants
  Across your breast, heavy as steel,
Leaving the rust of radiance
  To shape a wound that will not heal.

Enough, the crystal at your lips,
  Wasting you even as it lies—
Vibrant there before it slips
  Away, torn from your mouth like cries.

There will be now, as fumes from wood,
  A passing, yet no new death's care.
You will know only the frustrate mood
  Of breath tarnished to color of air.

HAZEL HALL.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

What Will Be History's Verdict?

SIR: Mr. Langer in the NEW REPUBLIC for April 30, 1924, takes issue with the statement of Professor Turner that the majority of American historians agree that Germany is primarily to blame for the war, but concludes that they do so because they have not had the opportunity to study the sources.

But since Professors Schmidt and Gooch are named among the revisionists, it is worth while to note their statements. Professor Gooch in his fine study, *History of Modern Europe, 1878-1919*, asserts, page 559, "The root of the evil lay in the division of Europe into two armed camps, which dated from 1871, and the conflict was the offspring of fear no less than of ambition." Dr. Schmidt, following the same line of argument, shows in the American Historical Review, April, 1924, in his article, Triple Alliance and Triple Entente, 1902-1914, that it was Germany which began this fateful division. The Triple Alliance, perfected in 1882, declared that Germany, Italy and Austria, would come to the aid of each other in case of war. But the Franco-Russian Alliance, which did not come into formal existence until 1893, pledged the two powers to mutual aid in case of aggression by Germany.

The "Armed Peace" was unquestionably, says Dr. Schmidt, the result of the German example. Other countries were forced to adopt universal military service. Concluding he asserts, "It was this refusal by Germany to follow this lead (Grey's plea for the Concert of Europe) before the diplomatic situation had been overtaken by military measures which made Great Britain finally range herself with France and Russia, prevented a compromise between the Alliance and the Entente, forced each group to maintain its position, and thus precipitated the war. No one, among the historians, contends seriously that the other powers were blameless, but that Germany was more blameworthy. It may suit Dr. Barnes to call this "piffle," but the American historians, comprising some of the most highly trained scholars, are not to be convinced without evidence. They are not likely to forget the truculence of university authorities during the war. They have not forgotten how Count Bernstorff received within five years after his appointment to Washington the doctorate of laws from ten leading American universities and they are not likely to be moved by pleas of German innocence now.

GUY V. PRICE.

Emporia, Kansas.

SIR: Mr. Price attributes to me the statement that the majority of American historians do not agree that Germany is primarily to blame for the war, but that they do so agree because they are misinformed. I repudiate any such dialectic utterance. I am not an Hegelian. What I actually did say is that if Professor Turner was using the word "historian" in its usual sense "he is unquestionably correct." I merely expressed doubt whether this is the viewpoint of the leading authorities.

As for the last sentences of Mr. Price's letter, they mean nothing at all to me. If he is launching an attack I must beg to be excused. I happened to be at the front as a volunteer, and hence I know nothing of the "truculence" of university professors at that time. In any case, I was not one of their ferocious rout. Why Count Bernstorff should be disinterred and recalled from the shades is an entire mystery to me. Why the readiness of American universities to give this gentleman degrees should now be adduced as evidence of Germany's guilt is entirely beyond me.

Mr. Price quotes from Professors Schmidt and Gooch, but I fail to see that his quotations are really relevant. No one denies that "the root of the evil lay in the division of Europe into two armed camps," and no one will attempt to deny that the alliance systems were inaugurated by the Austro-German Alliance of 1879. All this is far removed in point of time from July, 1914. It does not follow that because Germany and Austria concluded a defensive alliance to ward off the menaces of Russian aggression after the Congress of Berlin, all Europe was bound to divide into two hostile systems. Mr. Price does not think it worth while to point out that the Triple Alliance was just as defensive as the Franco-Russian Alliance and that Entente statesmen repeatedly admitted this. He either does not know, or else he does not appreciate the fact that Italy came on her knees, begging to be let into the Austro-German group in order to gain protection against the real or imagined menace of an attack by France. Perhaps he does not know that Russia was for many years an informal member of the German "bloc" and that for the best part of a decade England thought the Triple Alliance pretty good company. Personally I am not at all convinced that the Triple Alliance excluded even a Franco-German settlement. I rather suspect that Bismarck, when he made advances to Ferry, would have been willing to conclude a reasonable bargain with France, a policy which Rouvier and Caillaux at a later date looked on with considerable favor from the French side.

May I say a few more words in reply to Mr. Price's quotation from Professor Schmidt's article? It raises the vexed question regarding Germany's refusal to accept Grey's proposal for an international conference, made on July 26, 1914. I think I am right in saying that on this point there is no unanimity of opinion, even among the "revisionists." In all fairness it should, however, be pointed out that at that time the text of the Serbian reply was not yet known in Berlin. The German government was attempting to localize the conflict between Austria and Serbia, and was relying for support on the repeated statements of Grey that England had no interest in that conflict. The stand of the Russian government was not known in Berlin until July 23, and at the time the policy of localization was inaugurated there was no certainty that Russia would go the limit in support of Serbia. On more than one occasion previously Russia had shown no compunctions in abandoning Serbia to her fate. The German government had accepted every previous proposal made by England, including the suggestion that the four disinterested powers mediate in the event of a conflict between Austria and Russia. It was asking a good deal to expect Germany to throw over one policy and suddenly adopt the new English proposal of mediation in the Austro-Serbian dispute, especially when mediation almost certainly would have meant the humiliation of Austria before an international tribunal. The conference was not the only way to preserve peace. Conferences had not made a brilliant record for themselves in the past, and besides, Russia herself, in accepting the English proposal, expressed a preference for direct negotiations with Vienna, the method by which many a Balkan dispute had been settled.

It is impossible to answer these questions without going into the finest detail. There will probably always be difference of opinion on many of them, particularly regarding the comparative responsibility of Germany and France. Germany refused the conference, but tried to restrain Austria. France accepted the conference, but did nothing to hold back her ally, to say the least. But it is hard to see how any one conversant with the source material can still place greater blame on Germany than on Austria and Russia. Since Mr. Price quotes Gooch, I recommend that he read what that historian says regarding this point. I venture to say that Professor Schmidt will agree with Gooch, in spite of the somewhat misleading statement on the last page of his article in the American Historical Review.

WILLIAM L. LANGER.

Worcester, Massachusetts.

Art in the Movies

SIR: Why do writers immediately wax dogmatic when they address themselves to abstract subjects? The least substantial and least tangible things, which by their very nature are the least certain as foundations for theories are the very things most tempting to Sir Oracles.

Ralph Block discusses art in your issue of May 14—motion picture art, if you please. He says, speaking of the movies, that "it must be pressing on and on urgently to hold visual attention taut. . . . Once this motion slackens pace, attention goes." If this were true, it is impossible to conceive any dramatic future for the screen as a medium, because without the change of pace that is tempo, there can be no drama; the story that cannot slow up for the contrasting values of hurried physical movement and the unhurried gradualness of mental reaction is no story at all, and even a man who writes about art must know that. When Block speaks

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of a "definitive projection of living essences," he comes perilously nearer to suggesting a Negro camp meeting in summer than to discussing art.

NORAH KEATING.

New York City.

Is Compromise Necessary?

SIR: Mr. Soule's words in a recent issue of the New Republic say, "and so could throw the choice of President into the hands of the progressive balance of power in Congress. Such power could, of course, command compromise and concessions." But won't that be described by others as corruption? The public is familiar with the sort of deal by which you support my bill for a tax of $1,000 a word on national political platforms in return for my supporting your bill to require all motor trucks engaged in interstate commerce to install guards against sidewise splashing of mud on pedestrians' garments, and is less shocked at such trading than perhaps it ought to be; but the furnishing of congressmen's votes for President in return for "compromise and concessions" would be unfamiliar, and the public has never failed to regard as a scandal any deal which involved the delivery of any sort of votes in the election of a President. I am sure that any "compromise and concessions" in connection with progressive votes for President in an election by the House of Representatives would make it impossible for the new party to look for any considerable support from that part of the masses which takes a morally sensitive view of public affairs. And does the new party hope to gain victory without the help of that element?

ARTHUR J. ZELLNER.

Ballard Vale, Massachusetts.

SIR: Mr. Byington overlooks the difference between log-rolling and the exercise of compromise for public purposes. Compromise is of the essence of political action, however informed by principle. A legislature composed of men each sticking to the last gasp for complete fulfillment of his own set of principles would never pass a law, except under the impossible condition that a majority could be found who all thought exactly alike. For years the Irish party and the Labor party as minorities in the House of Commons traded and bargained with the larger groups, and obtained much desired legislation by so doing, without being guilty of corruption. It is not inconceivable that a progressive minority in Congress, confronted by the necessity of choosing between two old-party candidates for President, could choose the one offering them the closest approach to their own program without incurring the disapproval of the morally sensitive. Certainly the morally vigorous would eagerly seize the opportunity to make such a bargain, if the alternative were to exercise no power in the matter.

STEVEN T. BYINGTON.

New York City.

The Job and the Middle-Aged Woman

SIR: I read Alice Wholey's article on the Job and the Middle-Aged Woman, with considerable bewilderment. For years I have heard people jibing at the man old enough and rich enough to retire who loves his business and is unwilling to leave it.

Is the spectacle of a mature, intelligent woman—hankering for a job buying underwear less diverting—than that of a man in the same position? She becomes embittered when she realizes that in the business world she is useless. But after all what is business but the ugly pressure of necessity—and going into business when you don't have to seems rather like firemen busily scaling ladders up the side of a house when there is no fire.

The average middle-aged woman who has done her work well for twenty years should feel a deep sense of satisfaction, and look forward to gratifying formerly thwarted ambitions—or desires. I can hardly believe that there is a man or woman without a secret longing—if it is only a longing to sit in the sun.

Perhaps the problem of the middle-aged woman is caused by her shame at appearing indolent or unsuccessful—perhaps it is just a desire to excel in that twentieth century American virtue, efficiency.

GEORGE SOULE.

New York City.

The Bandwagon

DUCIT AMOR PATRIAE

If people will not learn to be patriotic on their own account the Government should make it mandatory.

—Representative Bloom of New York in introducing a bill making it a penal offence for civilians to omit tipping or removing their hats when the national flag is carried in parades.

IT ISN'T THE MONEY THEY'RE AFTER, IT'S THE PRINCIPLE OF THE THING

The idea has been planted throughout the structure of American activities that no business is quite justified if its sole aim is profit to whoever conducts it.

—President Coolidge, addressing the National Association of Real Estate Boards in session at Washington, June 6.

THE UNSPEAKABLE HUN

The Dawes report shows that Germany, instead of fulfilling her obligations, has been concentrating all her energies on strengthening her industrial and economic situation, and hence her violation of her pledges cannot be excused.

—The World's Work for June.

HOW DARE THEY INTERFERE WITH MR. FALL AND HIS FRIENDS!

We are just emerging from the dense mists of the passing night—a murky blackness of charges and countercharges, slanders and calumnies, corruption and falsehood. Political opportunists in the usurped seats of the mighty, for their own advantage, have forgotten their obligations to preserve a nation's ideals enthroned in the hearts of the people—and have engaged in bizarre carnivals of investigation and muck-raking.

—Walter Hoff Seely in Success, June, 1924.

AT LEAST IT HASN'T HURT HIM ANY

Alexander M. Ross, adjudged incompetent in 1915, because of retarded mental development and released from Bloomingdale in 1916, to buy a ranch in New Mexico, now owns $210,000 in real estate and has a personal estate of $252,116. . . He is said to have been helped by the outdoor life.

—New York Times.

THE RIGHT MAN, OF COURSE, IS THE ONE WHO GETS AWAY WITH IT

The advantage of one-man control in government (if he is the right man) is shown by the situation in Italy. The victory of the Mussolini ticket in the recent election records the almost overwhelming approval of the nation, and gives thus absolute legality to government operations which before had assumed power through the force of events.

—The Bache Review.

THE MOVIES COME INTO THEIR OWN

In a few years, the industry has become one of the miracles of the age. . . It must take its rightful place with steel and oil.

—Will H. Hays.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

American Comedy

TEN years ago people went to see comedies like It Pays to Advertise, in which the heroes were breezy business men who made a great deal of money in the last act, or to sentimental dramas like Turn to the Right, in which the simple American home was glorified. Today, they go to see satires like Beggar on Horseback, in which business is made ridiculous; or comedies like The Show-Off and The Potters, in which breeziness is made obnoxious and the American home hideous. It is not merely that these plays find producers but that they actually become popular. The Potters is now in its seventh month and The Show-Off has celebrated its hundredth performance. The work of a generation of young men who have served their apprenticeship to the bond-selling business, the advertising agencies and the ideals of Main Street generally and who, encouraged no doubt by the example of Sinclair Lewis, have decided to trust their instinct in reacting against them, these plays find, as Lewis's novels did, audiences with similar instincts ready to find expression in laughing at their own dullness and absurdity. Such comedies and their public are a sign—if not indubitably that Americans are becoming more intelligent—at least that America has reached a point of supersaturation with commercial ideals. We have at last become conscious of the appearance we present and have commenced to satirize ourselves. Indeed, the business man and the romantic advertiser already show signs—in the pages of Life, for example—of passing into the popular mind as stock comic characters, like the hayseed of yesterday.

Nonetheless, our satirists have retained much of the machinery, and hence of the point of view, of the business-man's comedy upon which they have improved. The homely little old mother of Turn to the Right still survives—though in a modified form—at the foundation of The Show-Off and even of Expressing Willie; and the chief male characters, however hollow or preposterous, still continue to make a great deal of money in the last act, like the hero of It Pays to Advertise: Aubrey Piper, in The Show-Off, saves his brother-in-law from being swindled out of the profits of his invention and Mr. Potter turns out, after all, not to have sold the valuable oil lease. Beyond the kind of satire which depends for its effect upon intensifying ugliness, our comic writers tend to gravitate naturally toward the commonplace—nor does it seem to me that the pessimistic heresies of the last scenes of The Adding Machine, for example, are much less commonplace than the reassuring conventions I have mentioned above. But there is no doubt that in effects of ugliness the American stage has recently distinguished itself. The almost half-witted joviality of The Show-Off; the cooped-up poisoned interiors of The Adding Machine; and the series of collisions between people living too hastily and too close together which makes The Potters like a long headache—people trying to talk on the subway, trying to eat and transact business at the same time; a pair of lovers on the piazza suddenly arrested by the head-lights of another pair of lovers who are parking their car in the street; the members of a family, all with mutually conflicting aims, coming and going in a house amid the confusion of door-bell, telephone, phonograph and radio; it is in such heightenings of the surface horrors of modern life that American comedy has excelled.

What one chiefly misses in all these plays, however, even at their strongest as satire, is a feeling for style: American dramatists do not write very well. Connelly and Kaufman deal more fancifully and more gaily than these others with the office-building and the suburban sitting-room, but they do not write any better. Zona Gale, who writes well in her novels, loses most of her distinction on the stage. Rachel Crothers, who in Expressing Willie presents the successful business man going in for culture, invents some extremely amusing patter for the conversational artist and the psychoanalytic siren into whose hands Willie has fallen and shows a comparatively distinguished gift for comic dialogue, without ever quite convincing one that she is the artist whom the subject might well have employed. Scott Fitzgerald, in his play The Vegetable, which has been published but never produced in New York, has brought to the comedy of commercial mediocrity an imagination perhaps further from the commonplace than that of anyone else who has attempted it, but his curiously uncertain grasp of his subjects, which is more disastrous in a play than a novel, seems unpropitious to its success on the stage.

What might we not get, one asks oneself, if Ring Lardner were to write a play? He has already done several amusing sketches and there is a rumor that he is composing, in collaboration with George Gershwin, a version of Carmen in "the American Language." His new book of short stories seems to me to establish him as far more nearly an artist than either Mr. Kelly or Mr. McElvoy—I might almost say than Mr. Rice. He has a distinctive and charming imagination and he writes Americanese with a real sense of style. If anyone could produce a genuinely first-rate one hundred percent American comedy, it would probably be he. But in the meantime, he is busy supplying the text for a daily syndicated comic strip—just as Mr. McElvoy has recently taken the Potters into the comic section with a daily strip of his own. That is just the trouble with American comedy: it is still too near not merely to the comedy of yesterday, but to the funny paper—which, in spite of everything Mr. Seldes can say in praise of Krazy Kat, has never yet encouraged anything fine. The dramatists I have mentioned above have put before us the materials of a national comedy and have applied to them the methods of the comic strip. What is needed is someone to color them with the temperament of the artist.

The Grand Street Follies, at the Neighborhood Playhouse, is one of the wittiest revues I have seen in New York. It resembles the French, rather than the American shows of this kind in being actually a review of what has happened during the season; you have a conference of critics at the Algonquin, "a melodrama of the cut-rates of New York" called The Shewing-Up of Jo Leblanco, a violent play by the Moscow Art Theatre entitled These Fine-Pretty Depths, a suite of songs by the International Composers' Guild with a prelude for typewriter, motor-horn, etc. lasting five times as long as the solo, a production of Hamlet with John Barrymore in the title rôle, Fanny Brice as Ophelia, Gallagher and Shean as the Grave-Diggers and the Ghost represented, à la Hopkins, by a spotlight and a perfect imitation of the high refined voice of Mr. Reginald Pole reading the speeches offstage. It is easily the funniest revue, including Charlot's, I have seen this year and it deserves to run all summer. Would that Ziegfeld and John Murray Anderson would get Miss Agnes Morgan to write their books for them.

EDMUND WILSON.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Autumn of Romance

Last Essays of Maurice Hewlett. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

IN these last essays, a literary voyage of nearly thirty years finds its fair and quiet haven. It is not the undiscovered coast which the mariner sought and of which more than once he seemed almost within sight. In one of his essays Hewlett reminds us of the passage in Hakluyt's account of the sailors returning from the expedition to Muscovy in the days of Boris Godounov, who knew that they were off the coast of Sussex before they saw the white cliffs, by the smell of the may wafted over the sea. Thus Hewlett himself who had sought in strange seas "Sabean odors of Araby the blest," finds his last romance in the pleasant and familiar things of the southern English counties, in memories and in books.

Hewlett's sail was always filled by the wind of romance, though his hold was freighted by a solid cargo of scholarship. He steered first toward Italy, and in Earthwork out of Tuscany exchanged the modern tourist goods furnished by Ruskin, Pater and Vernon Lee, for quattrocentist rarities. He held his course in The Little Novels of Italy—five tours de force in which the stuff and spirit of the novella are marvellously recovered. Meanwhile The Forest Lovers had contributed its stiffly woven figures and swiftly fading colors to the assembled tapestries of the romantic revival in the 'nineties, and had become a best seller. With this easy success behind him Hewlett set himself seriously to revive the historical novel. The Life and Death of Richard Yea and Nay and The Queen's Quair show how far modern psychology and realistic technique can carry the Richard of Ivanhoe and The Talisman, and the Queen Mary of The Monastery and The Abbot.

I remember a professor of biology feeling such confidence in Hewlett's method as to write him about the white rat in Mary's entourage, and the apologetic note in which Hewlett confessed that the rat was undocumented. But this hopeful enterprise remains merely a chapter in literary history. Still less is to be said today for another revival, that of the romance of modern life in Rest Harrow and Half Way House, in spite of the figure of Senhouse. Even the garment which this hero named and wore has had less persistence than the Morris chair. Of Hewlett's poetry it would be needlessly cruel to speak. It was in the essay that his rovings ended—in the peculiarly English essay of things and books as practised by a long succession of his countrymen from Charles Lamb to Edmund Gosse. Of several collections of his essays, this last volume is the largest and most representative gathering.

Here throughout, Hewlett's passion for romance mingled with the fact of scholarship or ordinary life is quite evident. In the first essay he returns to the village home of his family where the church is so filled with the graves of the mighty that there is little room for the living. "Research was encumbered by this overgrowth of dignitaries." In the second he records with admiration the tale of a lady who came to luncheon having just seen "a hansom drive down Victoria street with an eagle standing on the horse's back, balancing himself on outspread wings." These essays on Tulips, Daffodils, Crocus and Primrose are compounded of the book lore of the botanist and the personal adventures of the gardener. Ballads and balladry furnish the same attractive mixture of romantic and scholarly interest. The longest essays, however, are those which deal with characters known to us through literature and history, about whom the romantic fragrance lingers.

Hewlett seems to have transferred his foreign affairs from early Renaissance Italy to seventeenth century France, where the Cardinal de Retz, Madame de Maintenon, Pierre de l'Estoile, la Bruyère furnish him subjects for biographical studies in the urbane manner of Mr. Edmund Gosse. A similar group of English subjects are Thomas Fuller of the Worthies, James Howell of the Familiar Letters, Dorothy Osborne and Samuel Pepys. In regard to the latter indeed Hewlett's flair for the romantic serves him well as interpreter. In the face of the great mystery of Pepys's Diary—why did he do it?—no one has come nearer the answer than this:

> My first opinion was that he derived that cerebral excitation out of his details which it is to be supposed the lad may have who defaces walls with a stump of pencil, or the lover who, writing about kisses, or craving them as he writes, ends up his letter with a pullulation of little crosses—paraphrases of his passion. Reading him again, I see that that is not all . . . I now believe that he originally intended his entries of delinquency as an act of penance or humiliation— and that is supported by the accounts he gives of all his shifts and turns under the screw of jealousy —but that out of that act he found himself obtaining a perverse pleasure, which overlaid his first intention and supplanted it.

In other words Pepys enjoyed the two-fold romantic appeal of puritanism. "That leaven did double work in our man. It seasoned for him his pleasant vices, and gave also a peculiar thrill to his confessions, as if his pen, like his hair, was standing on end when he wrote."

On one subject the Last Essays are unhappily almost silent—on the art of fiction which Hewlett practised for so many years with such various results. A scrap on George Sand and Flaubert, an appreciation of the older realism of Moll Flanders, and a lament over the Suicide of the Novel (by an overdose of Freud) are all. As a novelist Hewlett had outlived his day, that brief day of sunshine and frost which comprised the romantic revival of the 'nineties. To modern realism Hewlett could approach no nearer than de Morgan; Butler, who was the father of its English type, was his peculiar heart's abhorrence.

Not only the novel, but much else in a world grown gray from the breath of war brought Hewlett into the elegiac strain to which nature in Hampshire and Wiltshire responded in many harmonies. One of the exquisite bits of weather which are scattered through his pages might form the theme for the volume:

> Although the days were still those of the dog, there was autumn in the air even then: a gray sky with a cool stream of wind from the west in which was that familiar taint of things dying which autumn always brings.

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Index Numbers and the Rise in Prices

The Making of Index Numbers, by Irving Fisher. New York: Houghton, Mifflin and Company. $7.50.

WITHIN the past two years or more there has been a wide variation in wholesale commodity prices and in wages, and in less degree, in retail prices and the general cost of living. These changes were much wider than anything in peace times in the last half century or more, save in the momentous twelve months of 1919-20. But the extent of this rise, as measured by the familiar price indices, has been markedly different. Bearing in mind that these indices are all of prices at wholesale; that they deal with much the same commodities; and that they may become the centre of renewed wage disputes and endless arguments, the extent of these differences becomes of real public interest. At the present time they stand as follows:

Index (1913 = 100)	Low (1921-'22)	Latest (1924)	Percent Increase
Department of Labor	138	150	9%
Dun's	132	155	17%
Bradstreet's	115	137	19%
Federal Reserve Bank of N. Y.	121	149	23%
Harvard Bureau	107	137	28%

To the wide "spread" here shown between the different indices may be added the still more significant spread between prices at wholesale, and, for example, the index of food prices at retail and an index of the estimated average "cost of living" in a skilled worker's family; and, on the other hand, between the indices of wages and factory earnings.

Index (July, 1914=100)	Low (1921-'22)	Latest (1924)	Percent Increase
Retail Food (Dept. of Labor)	136	141	4%
Cost of Living (Nat'l Industrial Conference Board)	155	163	5%
Unskilled Workers' Wages, Second Federal Reserve District	163	216	33%
Weekly Earnings of New York State Factory Workers (June, 1914 = 100)	190	222	7%

What the executive, the wage earner, the wage arbitrator, and everyone interested will wish immediately to know is why there should be these wide differences, and upon what index they may best rely. Very opportunely, then, the new Pollak Foundation for Economic Research has published Professor Irving Fisher's notable work on The Making of Index Numbers, which in some ways represents the most extended research upon the subject which has yet been undertaken. It is an expensive book, and the larger part of it bristling with formulas, tables, and abstruse calculations, but the main part of the book, in large type, is written in simple language, with numberless diagrams, to make it of easy comprehension by the general reader. Few economists have a greater gift for lucid and even popular exposition than Professor Fisher, and the present work is no exception.

First of all, what is an index number and how is it made? Almost everyone has a dim idea that it consists in adding up a series of price quotations or other numbers and striking an average; and, as a step further, comparing these averages from month to month or year to year. And this dim idea is a perfectly accurate description. But most folk, including even those who had studied the subject seriously, believed, before Professor Fisher undertook his laborious task of comparing scores of formulas and working these out in the most painstaking way, that it made a great deal of difference how this average was struck. What Professor Fisher's results show is that, with a few exceptions, it makes no very large difference, providing the sampling is wide enough, and that even the crude form of adding up a column of newspaper price quotations with the first figures of each in the same column, may be almost as useful as the most recondite formula that can be found; further (and this is of the most vital importance) that in general the degree of accuracy obtainable surpasses most previous belief.

What does make a tremendous difference, and virtually all the difference, as in the indices shown above, is the materials used; the number and variety of quotations; and the "weighting," that is, the importance that is given to each commodity or value. Thus, for example, if wheat should be considered twice as important as pig iron, and so on, then the figures for wheat would be multiplied by two, or, more simply, counted twice. In other words, the difference between Bradstreet's and Dun's and the more "scientific" indices is due not so much to the arithmetic method by which the average is obtained as to the materials and the different "weights" given to these materials.

This is very far from saying that all methods of averaging are equally good, and it is Professor Fisher's belief that at least several are distinctly bad. On this subject there has been, for a half a century and more, an unsettled controversy dating from the days of Jevons and Paasche and Laspeyres, and continued by Edgeworth, Bowley, Mitchell, Persons, Young and others, to the present time. And it is clear that this controversy has scarcely been settled yet. But it is Professor Fisher's great service to have shown, by endless examples and calculations, precisely where the chief differences between the different methods lie, and just what they amount to experimentally when actually employed on a particular set of data. The reader who is curious about these things will find in this book a perfect mine of information about all varieties of formulas and their workings.

Very much less attention is given to the problems of sampling, weighting and the like; and these are of importance. Even a century and more ago, when the first beginnings were made, it was recognized that, to give an equal weight to such items as salt and pepper, let us say, and wheat and iron and wool, was absurd. So all index numbers have endeavored more or less to get away from this unnatural bias or undue weighting. This evening up was at first achieved by giving a larger number of quotations, for example, of wheat and wool and their products, and it is now clear that even what is called a "simple" or unweighted index number may be, if the quotations are properly chosen and of sufficiently large number, about as well weighted and the index about as accurate as if to them a formidable array of laboriously ascertained weights had been assigned. And this is one of the things that, if it had been more considered, would have made this book not so censorious as it is of the so-called "simple" index numbers.

The importance of this point is that most of our familiar index numbers of long standing, like the Statist, the Economist, Dun's and Bradstreet's, and the old Bureau of Labor

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

index, so long used in this country, are of this latter type, that is, with what may be called rather crude systems of weighting. Anything that tends to cast doubts upon these old standbys naturally is disturbing to the public mind, as calling in doubt index numbers in general. So it is reassuring to know that even those index numbers which are demonstrably the most accurate that can be made, and against which no impeachment can be brought, may not differ very widely from the old timers in their results. Indeed, the latter may and do differ less from the more scientific formulas than these latter may among themselves. That is, the weights chosen and the sampling may, for example, bring about a wider "spread" between two indices compiled on an impeccably scientific formula than may be shown between one of these scientific indices and one of the simpler and older types.

This is shown most remarkably by a recent incident that ought to be known because it has a bearing upon a very important question. Our present Bureau of Labor Statistics index number is that which is now most widely used, and recognized, justifiably, as altogether the best index of wholesale prices which we have in America. It is constructed on one of the approved scientific formulas, the so-called "aggregative," which means nothing more than multiplying out the prices of each commodity by the estimated quantity of that commodity produced in a given year. Now this index, originally constructed in 1914, employed for this weighting the results of the census of 1909, the latest then obtainable.

The census is taken once in every ten years, and considerable changes in the quantity of commodities produced may easily take place. So it was felt that as soon as the 1919 figures were available a revision should be made; and two years ago this was undertaken; with the result that the index figures for the year of 1920, for example, on the new revised index, differed from the original figures by some ten percent, a surprising and rather disturbing result. Here was no question of difference in either the method of averaging or the method of weighting, but simply in the actual weights derived from the census figures and some items added.

Now when the Bureau of Labor Statistics was first organized it undertook to construct an index number of prices back to 1860, and it did this by taking the material gathered by Professor Falkner, for the Aldrich Committee of the Senate, and computing the monthly averages for each month and averaging these for the year. The old index prepared by Professor Falkner was simply the averages of prices for January of each year. But the surprising thing was that these two indices, when compared, were found to differ relatively little. Actually the figures for January proved on the whole a fairly good sample of prices for the whole year. But both of these indices were simple arithmetic averages, and so, in the modern view, not at all conclusive. And it was the general supposition that when the Bureau of Labor Statistics undertook to make a new index, on approved scientific methods, this latter would differ widely from these older results. This new index extended back only to the year 1890, but by so doing it made possible a comparison of the old and the new from that year to 1913, where the old series stopped.

Now the reassuring result was that these two series, the old aritlmetic and the revised aggregative, in any of these twenty-four years from 1890 to 1913, differed less in the annual average for any year than the recently revised aggregative differed from the original aggregative for the year 1920, and here the revision was carried back only seven years, to 1913.

This very striking outcome could only have been due to the fact that the old Bureau of Labor index, like the old Falkner index, proved upon trial to be a very good and highly representative sampling of prices for the period. But of course this was not a period of very wide and violent price changes. It is true that, for example, from the "Bryan" year of '96 to the outbreak of the War the average of wholesale commodities had risen by an even 50 percent; and that this was one of the heaviest price movements that had ever then been recorded in peace times; and, as everyone will vividly remember, this great rise brought about a tremendous outcry against the "high cost of living," and endless commissions and investigations.

But from the spring of 1919 to that of 1920, the Bureau of Labor index showed a rise of over thirty percent in twelve months. And then in the next twelve or fourteen months we had a decline in wholesale prices of over forty-five percent, the most violent fall ever shown by price indices running back to the days of George Washington. Such wide oscillations always produce a very wide "dispersion" of prices, that is, while the great majority of prices always tend to swing together, a goodly minority never do; and even among the majority the extent of the rise or fall is often very different.

So the wide discrepancy shown between the new and the old Bureau of Labor indices for 1920 was clearly due to the dispersion produced by the violence of the price movement. But it still remains that the *measure* of this dispersion was different when the census weights of 1919 or of 1909 were used; and this difference was wider than any revealed in a full quarter of a century between two indices differing chiefly in methods of averaging.

But while these results should modify some of the conclusions reached by Professor Fisher, they do not detract seriously from the high measure of the service he has performed in this work. Before he undertook these laborious calculations and comparisons, we did not know what were the best index numbers that could be constructed; we had theories but not proof, and in the whole field of science, whether it be of economics or anywhere else, it still remains that more or less "he discovers who proves." Indeed, the whole devilment of economics has always been that we have had so much empty or unprovable theory and so little solid fact and solid proof.

CARL SNYDER.

The Fabulous Forties

The Fabulous Forties, by Meade Minnegerode. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. $3.50.

THE sort of thing that Mr. Minnegerode attempts in The Fabulous Forties has been well done for various periods in English social history, but has been very rarely undertaken for America. Mrs. Earle and Mrs. Crawford have recorded some interesting things about the colonial centuries and about the Boston of a hundred years ago. Mr. Howe has made his contributions; and Mr. John Graham Brooks several years ago, in As Others See Us, summarized the most striking of foreign casual criticism. But the broad and alluring field of social background is still relatively unexplored. Mr. Minnegerode

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

has just capered across one corner of it, and others should follow.

Because it is measurably true that clothes make the man, it is fair to look at the jacket of this book to see what manner of production it is. "The Fabulous Forties," it reads, "is a picture of New York and America, variegated and bizarre, in the days when Fanny Ellsler, the Viennese dancer beloved by the son of the Great Napoleon, danced in a Park Row theatre while the pigs roamed the streets outside. It was a fantastic era which saw the rise of P. T. Barnum, King of the Humbugs; the turbulent visit of Dickens; the fatal bloody riots between the partisans of the actors Forrest and Macready. In the forties, when 'elegant' and 'refined' and 'female' and 'limb' were words that fell from every tongue, when even piano legs were concealed by frills of lace—the Herald carried advertisements for birth control, and the poular tableau (sic) vivants of Adam and Eve in the Garden became a menace to the public morals. Mr. Minnegerode has captured to perfection all the naïveté, the pomposity, the affectation of the eagle-screaming, refined and vulgar forties. It is a fascinating and incredible record of America's 'awkward age.'" The adjectives—and the French—go far toward characterizing the book.

It is the work of an American who is fascinated by his material and who regards it as incredible largely because he is surprised by it. He displays the amusement of the provincial traveler who finds all foreigners funny if not absurd because they do not behave like the people on his own block, and who thinks that Englishmen are affected in their speech. The diary of such a traveler is often engaging, the detailed observations are often sound, but the generalizations are likely to be very fallible. For one's own block is seldom the norm of the universe.

The book contains many errors of fact. It was probably just a slip in proof that accounts for the statement that in 1840, forty American cities contained 150,000 inhabitants; the number was ten times that. But only lack of information can account for the assertion that criticism was practically neglected in the magazines of the decade. It was criticism on which Poe's contemporary reputation rested. The Southern Literary Messenger, the Knickerbocker Magazine and the Dial, Graham's Magazine and Godey's make only the beginning of a list of periodicals which built up their circulation on criticism. And the dictum that Mrs. Mowatt's Fashion was "the first step of any importance in America toward the modern comedy of manners" overlooks Royall Tyler's equally important comedy, The Contrast, of two generations earlier.

There are more omissions than errors, however. Mr. Minnegerode read and copiously quoted from certain fundamental books on the period, but he missed as many as he found. Why not the Life of Edwin Forrest, the Letters of Fanny Kemble, the autobiographies of Mrs. Mowatt and Harriet Martineau, Mrs. Trollope's Domestic Manners of the American, and why of all illuminating books not Cooper's devastating Home as Found? In his accumulation of material it is a pity that for the Ellsler chapter the author missed the classic exchange of opinions on the danseuse by Ralph Waldo Emerson and Margaret Fuller: "Waldo, this is poetry!" "No, Margaret. This is religion!"

Yet the book offers its allurements and these are found in the vivacity of its presentation as well as in the material. In his resort to the newspaper files Mr. Minnegerode has done a lot of digging and has brought up some very choice nuggets, fusing them with a craftsmanship that makes a difficult process look deceptively easy. His chapters on the Tippecanoe campaign, the young men about town, aspects of home life, and social and civic functions are fresh and charming. To be sure, he is always afraid that the modern reader will miss the point, and always exclaiming at the eagle-screaming, pseudo-refinement and vulgarity of the forties as though the millennium had now overtaken us. But his enjoyment is enjoyable in itself, and though he is not a perfect Balieff in his conduct of the performance, once in a while he throws in a very happy bit. As, for instance, on a ball of 1841 which seems in its preparations to have reached "the apotheosis of artificial illumination. . . . One almost expects to find a light in the centre of one's plate when one finally becomes sufficiently accustomed to the glitter to partake of the delicacies and rarities furnished by 'the three states of New York, Pennsylvania and New Jersey, and a part of Great Britain and France,' and to have one's glass turn into a candlestick when one attempts to sample those wines of the very first quality which made it possible for 'this part of the ceremony to correspond with the elegant toute ensemble.'"

There are lots of decades left. It is to be hoped that Mr. Minnegerode will interpret another one, perhaps with equal vivacity and a little firmer mastery of his material.

PERCY H. BOYNTON.

Briefs on Books

The Green Bay Tree, by Louis Bromfield. New York: Frederick A. Stokes Company. $2.00. . . . . .

TO many readers this admirable novel of Mr. Bromfield will seem but the story of two sisters: Lily who sinned courageously and flourished like the green bay tree, and Irene who was too righteous and perished of drought. Essentially, however, it is far more the story of an epoch in middle-western American life, a bar of light thrown on that brief period during which wilderness became farmland, and farmland became factory-yard. John Shane, gay chevalier and man of the world flees from France to the American frontier some time before the Civil War. In the marshes he builds himself a "castle," and there he becomes the Warwick of his day. And a generation later his American-born daughter flees back to France, there to give birth to her love-child. The freedom of the frontier had already given way to the tyranny of the small town, and the very hunger which lured her father to the New World, drives Lily back to the Old. Mr. Bromfield paints on a large canvas, but with almost unfaltering deftness.

L. B.

None so Blind, by Albert Parker Fitch. New York: The Macmillan Company. $2.50.

THE Harvard life which Albert Parker Fitch describes is nearer Heaven than the Princeton of F. Scott Fitzgerald, but it is far less plausible. Apparently Harvard is a place where cigarettes are socially offensive and drink is regarded as a venal sin. Only the most idle and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

abandoned pupils would attend a burlesque show, and Dick Blaisdell, when the story opens, is one of them. By such evil courses he has forfeited the respect of his fellow students, from freshmen to seniors, and only recovers it after Felicia Morland and Percy Bartlett, Ph.D., have shown him the way. One feels that his own healthy resiliency saves the boy, rather than the condensed idealism which his mentors serve to him. In the end he rises higher than those expert Bostonians; the Ugly Duckling evolves into a swan, morally white and admired of all the world. And poetic justice can go no farther.

R. C.

Weeds, by Pio Baroja. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $2.50.

THE second of a trilogy which bears the significant title The Struggle for Life, Weeds cannot be judged except as part of the whole. In itself it scarcely moves; it merely surveys with dispassionate objectivity one phase after another of the lives of the disreputable, the poor, the outcast, in Madrid, but that it all tends toward a study of anarchy would be clear even if the Spanish version had not appeared. A notable social document, comparable to the Pelle trilogy, but grimmer, even repulsive, in its exposure of basic life. The translator had a stiff problem with the colloquialisms; but the American slang jars, none the less.

E. R.

Prunello, by S. B. P. Mais. New York: Brentano's. $2.00.

PRUNELLO, reviving the old theme of a swineheard who loved a princess, has not the fine economy of method that we find in the fairy tale. Colin Entwhistle, hack-writer and vagabond, wants to marry Olwen Vaughan, the daughter of a proud but impoverished aristocrat; and wins her after a series of complications covering 366 pages. His worthiness has conquered all obstacles—the leather and prunello and trappings of caste that stood in his way—as effectively as the swineherd's magic kettle; but not so promptly nor so blithely. In telling the story, the author could not suppress his flair for dissertation: that is the epitaph of the book.

R. C.

Wife of the Centaur, by Cyril Hume. New York: George H. Doran Company. $2.50.

THE conception of this book, and the author's attitude towards his hero, were undoubtedly influenced by This Side of Paradise; but its manner is untrammelled by imitation. Mr. Hume has the gift of rhapsody and an unusually insistent literary energy that he has not yet harnessed. The book is uncoördinated and abrupt; critical periods are allowed to lapse without comment. The story is not so much narrated as dramatized into salient episodes, some poetical to the limits of prose, a few satirically burlesque, and many interesting simply because the subject matter is interesting. Mr. Hume writes passionately and cogently; what he does not command is the continuity of thought that welds expressive words into a style.

E. G.

Skylines and Horizons, by DuBose Heyward. New York: The Macmillan Company. $1.25.

FROM the majestic serenity of mountain backgrounds the occasional dramatic notes in DuBose Heyward's poetry ring true and strong. Invocation has the challenge of a bugle, the sharp pain of Aftermath is as direct as a cymbal's clang, while Spring Mood uses the rough melody of reeds to voice resentment of the ruthlessness of new life.

Horizons modulates into gentle harmonies of old southern cities, with their faded pride, and the wide sweep of rice field and savanna, so quietly and simply that the vibrant tones of earlier themes die in our recollection. It is unusual to find in an individual so sure a presentment of such varying moods. Mr. Heyward's poetry will be appreciated by widely differing temperaments and for almost contradictory qualities—but each true-lover of poetry may find there something of the special beauty he style.

E. G.

Cloud Castles, by Edward Thomas. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $3.00.

W. H. HUDSON, in his introduction to these finely-wrought essays, presents Edward Thomas as a co-worshipper of Nature—but we find him more grammarian than simple nature-lover—a scholar-gypsy intent on his rhetoric book as he tramps. His naturalistic scene-painting is as arbitrarily romantic as Coleridge's—with his star "within the new moon's nether tip." Thomas's new moon is compelled to sink in the dawn!—and without the excuse of poetic license, for the only lyric quality in his polished prose is a kind of Edgar Allen Poetry. He is less the interpreter of nature than a distinguished craftsman.
seeks.

D. B. W.

Contributors

NATHANIEL PEFFER, an authority and writer on the Orient, is a frequent contributor to the New Republic.

GRACE HAZARD CONKLING, many of whose poems have appeared in representative magazines, is the author of Wilderness Songs, and a member of the faculty of Smith College.

VIOLA PARADISE, a contributor of articles to current magazines, is an investigator and writer on governmental and legislative matters.

HAZEL HALL, whose recent death in Portland, Oregon, has been announced, was a frequent contributor of verse to American magazines. Slow Death, which is published in this issue of the New Republic, was the last poem she wrote.

EDMUND WILSON, who has been on the editorial staff of the New Republic, and was formerly on that of Vanity Fair, is a critic of drama and books.

CARL SNYDER is in charge of the statistical work of the Federal Reserve Bank of New York City.

PERCY H. BOYNTON is a professor of English in The University of Chicago, and the author of London in English Literature and A History of American Literature.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Switchboard Comes to Life

Zero hour approaches. Wire chief and assistants are set for the "cut-over" that will bring a new central office into being.

In the room above operators sit at the new switchboard. Two years this equipment has been building. It embodies the developments of hundreds of engineers and incorporates the scientific research of several decades. Now it is ready, tested in its parts but unused as an implement of service.

In the terminal room men stand in line before frames of myriad wires, the connections broken by tiny insulators. Midnight comes. A handkerchief is waved. The insulators are ripped from the frames. In a second the new switchboard becomes a thing alive. Without their knowledge thousands of subscribers are transferred from the old switchboard to the new. Even a chance conversation begun through the old board is continued without interruption through the new. The new exchange provides for further growth.

This cut-over of a switchboard is but one example, one of many engineering achievements that have made possible a wider and prompter use of the telephone.

To-day, in maintaining a national telephone service, the American Telephone and Telegraph Company, through its engineering and research departments, continuously makes available for its Associated Companies improvements in apparatus and in methods of operation.

AMERICAN TELEPHONE AND TELEGRAPH COMPANY
AND ASSOCIATED COMPANIES
BELL SYSTEM
One Policy, One System, Universal Service

Brentano's Inc'
NEW YORK
5th Ave at 27th ST
Booksellers to the World
Mail · Telephone · Cable · Telegraph
ALL BOOKS ALL LANGUAGES
New York · Chicago · Washington · London · Paris

CAMP UTOPIA
Lake Ellis, Wingdale, N. Y.
A vacation ground for grown-ups
In the Berkshire Hills
120 minutes from Grand Central
Make reservations now for Fourth of July Week-End
W. J. Perlman, Managing Director — Dr. Will Durant, Associate Director
Address 2000 Broadway, N. Y. C.
Phone Columbus 2454 or Bensonhurst 0759

Companion-Helper
Position wanted, around July 1st. Qualifications: Domestic interest (including cook stove), child training and physical care, good at reading aloud, can row, swim; interested in literature and drama; good health; age 25. Will go anywhere. An unusual position desired. References. Address Box 276, New Republic.

SEXOLOGY
PSYCHOANALYSIS
AND RELATED SUBJECTS
Latest catalogs, ten cents. Sent in plain envelope. The foremost authoritative works for members of the Professions and Advanced Adult Readers.
Established 1899
THE BOOK LEAGUE
47 West 42nd Street, New York

THAT BOOK YOU WANT!
We have over 1,000,000 (Secondhand and New) on every conceivable subject in stock. On approval. Also Rare Books and Sets of Authors. Catalogues free. Mention requirements. Commissions executed.
FOYLES
121 Charing Cross Road, London, Eng.

Recent graduate with considerable experience, social and literary background, desires dictation or general secretary work during summer. Address Box 277, New Republic.

Looking for a woman of refinement and culture to take over the management of a large home in a small New Jersey town, about one hour out of New York. Address Box 281, New Republic.

High School Principal with ten years' experience desires connection with department of education in college or university. Has master's degree from Columbia University. Prefers psychology and philosophy of education to administration. Address Box 278, New Republic.

University Senior is open for position as tutor, counsellor and companion to one or two boys, July, August, September. Honor man in Latin and Greek. Varsity letter in athletics. No objection to traveling. Address Box 279, New Republic.

A few beautiful half-acre plots in 4,000-acre development: two lakes, hills, woods, waterfalls and streams. Each plot protected by 5 surrounding free acres. Over 3,000 acres kept as a wild park to conserve the natural beauties of this property. Community Inn open the year round. Informal country life under unusually pleasant conditions. Either sociability or complete seclusion. 2 hours from New York. Address Box 280, New Republic.

Hundreds Stand in Line in Philadelphia to Buy THE SUNDAY TRANSCRIPT. This Is Not True as to Any Other Publication on Earth. Never Solicited an Advertisement in Seventy-five Years. Six copies for Twenty-five cents. Sunday Transcript, Philadelphia, Pa.

A Handbook of
SUMMER CAMPS
A Guide Book for Parents and others interested in the Summer Camps — its origin, development, present status and practices. 1,500 Camps listed; 1,000 Camps critically described. 672 pages, 8 Maps, 200 illustrations, $5.00.

A Handbook of
PRIVATE SCHOOLS
8th ed., 992 pages, 6 Maps, 300 illustrations, $5.00. At all Bookstores. Send for Circulars.
Information and advice on Camps or Schools on request. Booklets and Catalogs free. Consultation on appointment.
PORTER SARGENT
14 Beacon St. Boston, Mass.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED